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# THE HOLY SPIRIT



# THE HOLY SPIRIT

Then and Now

BY

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“AN OUTLINE OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY”

“THE RELIGIOUS USE OF IMAGINATION”

and “THE HIGHEST LIFE”

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PHILADELPHIA

The Griffith & Rowland Press

1904

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Published October, 1904

From the Society's own Press

To

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE

**Milton Grosvenor Evans, D. D.**

THE PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AT CROZER

*and to*

**My Wife**

WHOSE LONG ILLNESS HAS ILLUSTRATED

THE GRACES OF THE SPIRIT

AND WHOSE COMPANIONSHIP HAS

MADE THIS WORK A JOY

1507





## PREFACE

WHAT the Holy Spirit did in founding Christianity, and what he does for its furtherance, still needs to be studiously looked into. Apparently so great need does not exist as to any other matter of equal importance. Questions are mooted of practical moment, such as these: What is new in the new life? How does the Holy Spirit produce that newness? How witness to it? To what can the new life grow? In what way does the Holy Spirit help its growth? How may we hamper and baffle the Spirit, or how accept and use his help? Does he still guide the disciple into truth? Into how much of truth? By what tests may his teaching be sifted from one's own pet fancies, or even from the specious persuasions of the father of lies? Is the Spirit of God our adviser? and how can I know his counsel from whims of my own, or from destructive and demonic foolishness? What organized relations does he set up between Christians? What authority, or approach to authority, does he give to the doctrines and rules of the church, or of a single church? What kind of polity helps, and what kind hinders his offices to associated Christians?

Practical and pressing as these questions are, they hint at doctrines; and doctrinal issues, pure and simple, which for ages had seemed to be settled for sound Christians, are reopened in many minds. These, for example: In what sense is the Holy Spirit personal?

How is he related to God? How does he operate upon the church, or upon the individual? Does he ever act without instrumentality, and in what cases? Or what instrumentality, if any, does he use?

If in any suitable way we consult the records of that great epoch when knowledge of the truth was copiously given, as John tells us, by "an unction from the Holy One," we may hope in some measure either to identify or to distinguish the doings of THE HOLY SPIRIT THEN AND NOW.

E. H. J.

CROZER SEMINARY, October 1, 1904.

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# THE HOLY SPIRIT

## CHAPTER I

### THE METHOD OF INQUIRY

#### 1. False Methods

IF we attend to what is glowingly preached or learnedly written in our day concerning the Holy Spirit, the disturbing fact appears that either an overbold piety is construing out of experience a doctrine which it prefers, or resolute orthodoxy is bent on discovering everywhere in Scripture the final dogmas of theology. If whimsical mistakes appear, they are quite invariably misinterpretations of experience. Misinterpretations of experience hardly occur apart from overweening confidence of self-knowledge; while this unhappy conceit is begotten by relish for an imaginary lesson out of one's own life. At an opposite extreme, those who are least disposed to make the Spirit of God responsible for oddities, persons of the soberest temper, and often in proportion to their sobriety, feel bound to read into the Bible, meanings undreamed of in biblical times but which for many a century have been the familiar tradition of orthodoxy. This is not to say that the data of Scripture fail to justify the orthodox dogmas, but it is to say that the data and not the dogmas are in the Bible.

So widespread and so cherished are the fruits of these erroneous tendencies that, although the remedy is plain, few can apply it without sacrificing some prepossession of their own. But the sufficient remedy is to ask from every text what was its intended purport, what meaning was meant. If we venture to add a meaning which the passage does not state, but seems to involve, we do this at our own proper peril; the Bible ought not to be held responsible. Especially on a theme so sacred and so incomprehensible as the one before us, we ought to be making sure of the facts rather than drawing inferences, and the Scriptures are the only adequate source of information as to the facts. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is distinctively a doctrine of revelation. It belonged to the Holy Spirit to expound his own work. Beyond that authoritative exposition no one has been able to take a sure step, although reason has spared no lawful effort, and mysticism has put forth every desperate or delighted endeavor, to break through the Bible's bounds. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit needs therefore to be reviewed, possibly revised, and probably delimited by the unflinching and practically new processes of biblical theology.

## 2. Biblical Theology

This searching method of inquiry is hardly a century old, and has not as yet won general deference. If the many ever become aware of this method, it will be followed only by the few. It exacts so comprehensive and detailed, so docile and judicial study of the Bible, that it can become the familiar organon of none but the most thorough, most conscientious, and wide-minded of bib-

lical scholars. Although in the study of our theme it would be helpful to a degree, the signs are many that its help has been very little or not at all resorted to, even in treatises on the Holy Spirit which claim to be distinctly scriptural.<sup>1</sup> Now and then of late the violation of its requirements has proved not less than startling. In the present undertaking let us make sure that we extend to biblical theology the poor courtesy at least of a recognition that it exists.

No doctrine, however well settled, can remain wholly unaffected when it passes under this method of reinvestigation. It is a historical method. Biblical theology deals with the recorded teachings of the Holy Spirit as successive stages and individual phases of belief about divine things. It is the only method of inquiry entirely fair to the Bible, or safe for ourselves. In the case, to be sure, of so unwonted a theological discipline, valor may be the better part of discretion. One needs courage to follow the line which the steady finger of biblical theology points out; not that we need feel afraid of the Bible's real teaching, but that we may not be able to escape a certain timidity in going about by these unfamiliar ways to find what that teaching is. To begin with, biblical theology forbids us many a trusted proof-text. The text, it says, did not signify to its writer, nor to its early readers, what it has come to mean to

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<sup>1</sup> Exceptionally free from this fault are the recent books by Professor Candlish on "The Work of the Holy Spirit," and Rev. W. E. Biederwolf's "Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit." The former with admirable insight follows the development of the entire doctrine in Scripture, and the latter is especially full and satisfactory in treating those scriptural expressions which are often used to support oddities of doctrine concerning sanctification.



us ; and naturally we feel a little disturbed when the new tactics pulls down our breastworks and snatches the familiar weapons from our hands. We are not surprised, though even more perturbed, to find those weapons turned against ourselves. And this may happen whenever it is seen that the divine revelation followed a human development. The problem is then sprung upon us, how much of a given teaching is from God, and how much from man. What, for example, in Paul's ninth of Romans is solid truth, and what is but drapery of cloud, rising from the everywhere diffused Hebrew idea of God's sovereignty ? Biblical theology hints that maybe Paul would not put the matter just so in our day. Biblical theology therefore has very naturally struck many cautious minds as a highly critical and hazardous way of theologizing. But its validity cannot be denied, and the only safety is in following to the end the path which it indicates. For if real question exists at any point as to God's share in the Bible, we must hold firmly to the dictum of the late Prof. George R. Bliss, that God's thought alone is the Bible. We must find out at all hazards what God meant for teaching. This can be done ; and this is why the processes of biblical theology, with all their risks, are the only processes fair to the Bible and safe for us.

### 3. Two Rules

A primary rule of this new procedure is that each writer of Scripture must be interpreted by himself and by his ascertained relations to other writers. The old rule was, "Compare Scripture with Scripture" ; but biblical theology has noticed that words and phrases do

not mean the same thing in different ages, with different surroundings, or on the tongues of different men. Its rule then is, let every writer interpret himself, or at most be interpreted by his group.

Such a rule puts biblical theology into intimate contact with the higher criticism. For criticism to fix the authorship of a document goes far toward fixing its meaning; while, conversely, the alleged meaning of some passage raises the question of its authorship. Baur's formidable attack on the New Testament, as writings of counter Petrine or Pauline tendency, was quite in line with the biblico-theological rule that every writer's characteristic attitude must be kept in view; and the replies to Baur were successful because they showed that he had misapplied that very rule. It was, indeed, to the controversy with Baur and Strauss that the existing development of this branch of theology is mostly due. Its early battles were fought over the Christological problem; but rather the more for this reason may it now deal with the problem of the Holy Spirit. This will appear when certain aspects of John's teaching are compared with that of Paul.

A still more radical law of interpretation has received peculiar emphasis from biblical theology; and this is that the established meaning of a word or phrase must always be taken for granted, unless there is unmistakable evidence that a new meaning is intended. Obviously correct and fundamental as this law is, it is continually disregarded in expositions of our theme. Particularly important are its bearings on the problem of the Holy Spirit's personality and relation to the God-head. To this problem we now address ourselves.

## CHAPTER II

### HE OR IT?

WITH many it is a point of conscience never to speak of the Spirit of God as *it*. But the spirit of a man is always called *it*, and without disparagement to his personality ; also in the first unequivocal presentation of the Holy Spirit as a person, the conception of sexlessness in spirit as such constantly prevails. "I will ask the Father," said Jesus, "and he will give you another helper, to be with you always ; the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive, because it sees not nor knows it, but ye know it, as dwelling with you and being in you" (John 14 : 17). The question is not whether we may call the Holy Spirit *it*, but whether we may call it *he*.

#### 1. Old Testament Use

The Hebrew Scriptures never seemed to the Hebrew people to teach that the Spirit of God was personally distinct from God. With the New Testament before us, we may think we see the separate personality of the Spirit pre-intimated in the ancient oracles ; but it could never have been learned nor proved from them. We cannot know that this meaning was meant. What the offices were which the Old Testament ascribed to the Holy Spirit is not just now the question ; but it is safe to say that every one of those offices could be fulfilled, even though the Spirit were not a distinct person ;

whereas, if the New Testament affords decisive evidence of his distinct personality, it is because only a distinct person could do what the Holy Spirit is there said to do. All other representations might be adequately explained as personifications.

In the elder Scriptures the Spirit of God is, in general, his life, his vital energy, his innermost self. This is at the farthest remove from making the Spirit of God a distinct person. As the spirit of a man is the man, so the Spirit of God is God. It may be the mind of God, and so God himself. Thus Isaiah: "Who hath directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" (40 : 13.) The presence of the Spirit is but the presence of God: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Ps. 139 : 7.) This identification of the Spirit with God ascribes nothing in particular to the Spirit, and the questions about it are literary. But from the idea of spirit as life or vital energy spring more characteristic uses of the word.

The usage which merely identifies Spirit with God is far from prevailing. What the prevalent usage is we have no familiar words to set forth, except as familiar words may serve when taken etymologically. Thus, as regards the Most High, the Spirit was an effluence, the energy of God flowing forth; as regards things it was an affluence, his energy flowing upon; as regards men it was an influence, his energy flowing into. Efflux, afflux, influx, these less familiar forms, bent back a little toward their earliest signification, tell us what the ancient oracles mean by *the Spirit*. Or, because spirit primarily means breath, the word *spiration* has been

chosen by theology to set forth the general implications and even the metaphysics of the title, *Spirit of God*. Using the theological term as a root-word, but without any metaphysical implications on our part, we may describe the Old Testament's customary view of the Holy Spirit as expiration, aspiration, inspiration, a breathing forth, a breathing upon, a breathing into, by divine energy.

The first act ascribed to the Spirit presented it as *from* God and *upon* things : "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1 : 2). Isaiah, representing a much later type of thought, still speaks of the Spirit in the same way, as acting upon beasts and birds (34 : 16). Ordinarily it is said to come upon the prophets ; upon unwilling Balaam (Num. 24 : 2) and frenzied Saul (1 Sam. 19 : 23, 24), upon the whole line of prophets, from Elisha under his double portion (2 Kings 2 : 9-15), to the Messiah receiving the anointing which Isaiah announced (42 : 1 ; 61 : 1) and which Jesus claimed (Luke 4 : 17 f.). In all these cases the Spirit used men as it used beasts and things ; that is, it was a divine energy, coming upon all and controlling all alike. This notion of an afflux, sweeping all before it, was much more frequent in the Old Testament than that of an influx pervading a human soul. A characteristic and frankly amusing instance is given in the story of an attempt by Saul, the jealous king—and he had much to try him—against the life of his young captain, David, (1 Sam. 19 : 8-24). It was after another of David's prodigious successes against the Philistines, when "an evil spirit from the Lord" so wrought upon Saul that he could not be quieted by David's harp. On the contrary he grew furious and tried to pin the mu-

sician to the wall with his javelin. But David slipped away to Samuel, with Saul's officers after him hot foot. They found him at Naioth in Ramah, where Samuel stood at the head of his prophets, all prophesying, much as one may see it at this day among the dervishes in Egypt. But the good Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. Three successive squads of officers fell under the spell; and then Saul, whose earlier experiences ought to have taught him better, came himself to end the business. But the Spirit did not wait for Saul to reach Samuel. It came upon him by the great well that is in Secu, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

To conceive that God used the prophet as an instrument rather than equipped him as an agent, controlled his faculties rather than elevated his functions, goaded him into a mantic fury rather than led him in a rational service, this is largely the view of the Old Testament, and reveals a primitive way of thinking, signaling so far community with ethnic religions.

But the higher view is not entirely wanting. It was Pharaoh's view that Joseph, the interpreter of his dreams, was "a man *in* whom the Spirit of God is" (Gen. 41 : 38). The Levites' confession, as Nehemiah reports it, owns that Jehovah had testified for many years against his people by his "Spirit *in* [perhaps *through*] the prophets" (9 : 30). The book of Job makes the inflowing universal, and Elihu could justify



thus his boldness: "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (32 : 8). Isaiah does not overlook the more spiritual, less mechanical view of inspiration when he would exalt the authority of Israel's greatest leader: "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying . . . where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him [or perhaps, *in the midst* of them]?" (63 : 11.) And at so late a date as that of the book of Daniel, the courts of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar are said to recognize the statesman-prophet as one "in whom is the spirit of the holy gods" (4 : 8; 5 : 11).

But in the view commonly taken a prophet was a man "possessed." He did not own himself, could not help doing as he did, and should not be made to answer for what he could not help doing. This view would account, where held, for the occasional impunity with which the prophet delivered his message against a Jeroboam or an Ahab, while often the subject of annoyances at the hands of the people. It is quite the people's way to persecute those whom they fear (1 Kings 13 : 1-7; 18 : 18; *cf.* 22 : 27; Jer. 26 : 8-24; 38 : 4-28).

Our English tongue closely corresponds to that of the Old Testament in habitually referring to influence as over or on, rather than in or through. Recognizing these two ways of applying influence, we may more succinctly put it that the Old Testament viewed the Spirit of God as an effluence from God, and an influence either on or in man. Thus in the elder Scripture the Spirit is uniformly presented as impersonal, except when it is identified with God himself, or except

as the energy of a person may be spoken of as a personal energy. But just as no one would understand that the energy or influence of a man was actually a person, and as no one could misunderstand what was meant by calling it impersonal, like one's hand or foot, so we need not hesitate to use the same words in the same way, and to state that anciently the Spirit of God was thought of as personal only in the sense that it was the influence of the Supreme Person, and was really conceived to be impersonal, because it was put forth by, rather than distinguished from, the Maker and Ruler of all.

Notwithstanding the tendency toward polytheism based on deification of natural objects or forces, a tendency which was often too strong for Jehovah-worship in Israel, and notwithstanding the more philosophical erection of divine functions, such as creation, preservation, and destruction, into a kind of divine triad, like Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva of the Hindus, a fancy widely prevalent among the more reflective Orientals, the persistent instruction of Israel by prophecy and by sore discipline had during the Babylonian captivity trained the Jewish mind at last to rigid, uncompromising, and arrogant monotheism. It was so serious an obstacle to Christianity that our religion had but a brief and unfruitful history among the Jews. Ebionitism promptly set itself against faith in the divinity of Christ, which is of the very genius of Christianity. We may also regard as completely established by the time when Christ came the conception of the Spirit of God as an impersonal energy or influence from God operating on or in things, animals, and men.



## 2. New Testament Use

In entering on the study of New Testament usage it is essential to bear in mind that the established meaning of the title *Spirit of God*, *Holy Spirit*, or *Spirit* either with or without a qualifying addition, must be understood in the Old Testament sense, unless there is unmistakable proof that a new sense is intended. How important this rule is will appear again and again, and presently in part. It will at the same time be seen how completely the rule is overlooked in current expositions of the New Testament teaching.

The problem still before us is whether the Holy Spirit is a person. The New Testament sets the case before us in three ways : first, the Spirit is presented as impersonal ; secondly, it is presented as personal ; thirdly, it is recognized as a person, but yet presented impersonally, that is, under the thoroughly familiar aspect of influence. The unqualifiedly impersonal representation prevails throughout the four Gospels up to the promise of the Paraclete at the institution of the Lord's Supper, as recorded by John. Here the representation is expressly and plainly personal. But occasionally even in this promise, and generally throughout the Epistles, the representation is of a person acting impersonally, that is as an effluence from God, as an influence on or in man.

### (1) Impersonal

A more singular illustration of unwarrantable reaction by dogma upon exegesis can hardly be found than the interpretation of *Holy Spirit* as personal, in the trinitarian sense, when that title is used by Gabriel to Mary in the expressly impersonal language of the an-

nunciation (Luke 1 : 35). I say *expressly impersonal* because the angel's explanation, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee," is at once repeated impersonally in its parallel, "the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Possibly the absence of the article before *Holy Spirit* and before *power* strengthens the implication of impersonality. But it is more to the purpose that to give here a personal meaning to a title which never before had such a meaning would work all sorts of confusion. For example, if *Holy Spirit* meant power of the Highest, the angel's explanation was intelligible to Mary; but it was only bewildering if the name was personal, for Mary had never heard of a two-fold or three-fold personality in the Godhead. Again, the New Testament nowhere else hints that the Third Person in the Trinity is in any sense father of the Second Person, or of Christ; certainly not of Christ who indeed after his ascension was to send, not his Father, but the Holy Spirit from the Father (John 15 : 26). Once more, no reason can be found for regarding the Father as one Person of three, except that by the incarnation he was manifested as Father of the Son. All the expressions which can be cited in favor of so transcendent a doctrine had their rise in this historical begetting. Finally, the only natural way of taking the angel's words to Mary, "Therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," is the way which the Old Testament affords and which beyond a doubt was accepted by Mary, namely, that God himself was about to generate Jesus through "the power of the Highest."

It is of some collateral interest to note that, at the period when the Apostles' Creed was framed, belief in

the Spirit's personality had not been formulated, and therefore when this venerable symbol declares that Jesus Christ our Lord was "conceived of the Holy Ghost" it cannot be claimed that our understanding of this article was the early and purposed understanding. Such an understanding belonged quite likely to individuals but not yet to the church.

According to Luke (11 : 13) the Lord assured his disciples that, on occasion, "their heavenly Father would give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him," but according to John (14 : 16, 17) the Paraclete was to be with them forever. No end of pains has been taken to reconcile the special and intermittent gift according to Luke with the steady and unbroken companionship according to John. How gratuitous! When the earlier assurance was uttered, *Spirit* was invariably understood in its Old Testament sense as a timely but impersonal aid, whereas the promise in John is the very first plain indication that the Holy Spirit is to be a companion and therefore a person. The impersonal aid might be intermittent, it would necessarily be intermittent so far as it was a special aid; but the companionship must be constant, it would necessarily be constant so far as it was a faithful companionship. Furthermore, the occasional impersonal aid might come from the constant personal companion, but it would never answer to mistake the occasionally needed and occasionally given *aid* for a *Companion* that came and went. Against such a mistake the sufficient safeguard is in holding fast to an established meaning until the time for a new meaning has come and that new meaning clearly seen.

If John had had in mind the Third Person of the Trinity could he have written that "the Holy Spirit was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified"? (7 : 39.) It would have been untrue to write that the personal Spirit was not yet. He had been from eternity. But that outpouring which every one then called the Holy Spirit was not yet. We cannot say in the springtime that the Mississippi is not yet, but we may perhaps say that the spring freshet is not yet. Indeed, the form of expression used by John is as spontaneous and accurate when taken impersonally as it would be awkward and incorrect if taken personally. Insist on the personal meaning and we concede to Sabellianism its best proof text. We say that the date for the manifestation of the unipersonal God under the temporary form of a seemingly personal Paraclete had not yet arrived because his manifestation under the form of a seemingly personal Son had not yet been withdrawn. But this interpretation, so hostile to the common faith of Christians in all ages, is strictly debarred by the certainty that the familiar Old Testament meaning, *influence*, was still the sole meaning of *Holy Spirit*. Of course something new was in John's mind, something peculiar to the new era, something which had not yet begun. But the newness to which he referred in stating that "the Holy Spirit was not yet" was in the same sentence explained by him as the outflowing, refreshing influence of one who had satisfied his own thirst in Christ. It was to be a newness of effects, not a new conception of the Spirit who would produce those effects.

The interest in these often discussed passages is one of technical exegesis and theology. Very practical and

often distressing is the interest in our Lord's warning against blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. This warning was recorded by all the synoptists (Matt. 12 : 31 ; Mark 3 : 29 ; Luke 12 : 10). John in his first Epistle (5 : 16) may be referring to it as the "sin unto death," and, if the denunciations which we have read with awe in the Epistle to the Hebrews (6 : 4-6, especially 10 : 29) are not intended for precisely the same offense, they refer to a similar outrage. Although to "speak a word against the Son of man" may not be to "tread under foot the Son of God," to "blaspheme against the Holy Spirit" is to "do despite to the Spirit of grace." That fatal blasphemy has much in common with this final apostasy. But what we are here concerned with is the doleful misunderstanding which has led many unregenerate persons into despair and not a few inconsistent Christians into insanity. It is a downright misunderstanding which has wrought all this mischief. The blasphemy that Jesus spoke of was not specifically against the Third Person in the Trinity. No one who heard Jesus could suppose it was. If his warning had a trinitarian meaning it had no meaning at all for the Pharisees. They had never heard of a Trinity. But in the Old Testament sense of words the Master's warning had to their ears a terrible significance. They had heard of the Spirit which spake through the prophets. They knew of the signs which the divine effluence had given to attest the prophetic message and to carry out the will of God. These signs were repeated for the Son of Man. The miracles wrought through him by the Spirit, that is, by the divine energy, themselves declared the good news. But the Pharisees refused to

see the signs, they hardened their hearts against the good news, they dared at last to say that it was the devil and not God who wrought in Jesus. The goodness of God could do no more; the stubbornness of man could no farther go. If this was the situation with his enemies they had fixed themselves in eternal sin. It was not because a Third Person in a Trinity had sacredness which did not belong to a First or to a Second Person. No such possibility was in mind or could be in mind, for it could not be suggested to any one present by anything said. Who knows but every sin is a sin against the warnings of the Holy Ghost? But it was the pitch of the offending and not the object of the offense that the gracious Teacher gave warning against. This is in effect our usual way of explaining what he said, but the proof that our explanation is correct is the fact that *Holy Spirit* then meant an impersonal energy of God which was at work in Jesus as it had wrought in the prophets.

The point now made, that the Old Testament meaning of Spirit prevailed in the Gospels up to the fourteenth chapter of John, is so far from customary that custom energetically reverses this view. It holds that, without having to wait for the "beatific vision" in the skies, the senses of men distinguished the Persons of the Trinity at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3 : 16, 17). It is a traditional argument for the Trinity and the orthodox are few who have been able to forego its use. We ought really to have been on our guard against evidence so physically complete at a period so early. We gladly admit that the man Jesus was here certified



to be God's Son, but it does not in the least follow that the divine in Jesus was personal before the incarnation. That true doctrine must be learned elsewhere from more direct testimony. As to the visibility of the Spirit, it is enough to ask what there is in the gentle nestling of a dove to indicate divine personality rather than divine enduement. Indeed, it would seem hardly suitable for a Person in the Godhead to be embodied in a dove, but divine influence might engagingly take this form. The later references of the New Testament to the event present it as an unction whereby Jesus was ordained (Acts 10 : 38) as Messiah. The Trinitarian interpretation not only anticipates a revelation but despoils the closing scene of our Lord's baptism of its actual value as a publication.

## (2) Personal

It has now perhaps been sufficiently shown that the Old Testament meaning of *Holy Spirit* prevailed in the Gospels up to the last Supper and its accompanying address, as given by John. But now a distinctly personal meaning asks for recognition. If that meaning was entirely new, the need of it was new. The situation was one for which the Master had not succeeded in preparing his closest friends. Now he must go. But he would not leave them orphaned ; he would come to them. He would even dwell in them. But he would come and would abide in the person of another Paraclete.

It is impossible to make the relations of the disciples to Father, Son, and Spirit separable relations. They already knew the Father in knowing Jesus, and Jesus would not be absent when the Spirit was present. But

it is equally impossible to fuse Spirit, Son, and Father into a single personality. If the Godhead is one person in the strictest sense, also in some valid sense there are three Persons.

What, then, is personality? As distinguished from beasts a person is a rational being. Among animals familiarly known the dog possesses intelligence that simulates reason and a capacity for affection almost sad to see. How many Christians love God as "old dog Tray" loves his master? But poor Tray, well as he knows English, cannot think abstractions; yet this is the least which reason has to do. Reason can also know intuitively, that is, by their own light, certain fundamental abstractions which are called "first truths." It knows that there is moral difference and moral obligation. If before Tray grew wise he sometimes had to feel ashamed, this was not because he was aware of any moral wrong in the misdoings of his puppyhood. For dogs moral wrong does not exist. It was only because he was sensitive to his owner's opinion of him, and the vanity which made the beast amiable had been humiliated by a scolding. But even if a bad man can be a sort of heathenish demigod to his devoted canine worshiper, persons alone are able to think of a Supreme Being who is infinite in all excellences, and as such is the Counterpart, Archetype, and Ruler of all lesser persons. As a person, then, the Holy Spirit must be capable of rational thought.

As distinguished from other persons, considered, that is, as a rational individual, a person must be aware of his own thoughts, feelings, and purposes. That is, a person is self-conscious. By virtue of self-conscious-



ness persons are the most thoroughly distinct of all beings. Perhaps no other beings need to be absolutely distinct. All others might imperceptibly blend at their margins, as air and ocean are intermingled in mist upon the sea. But persons are as entirely several and single as though each existed alone. When, therefore, we say that, in the strictest sense, God is one person, we mean that he is of essence and consciousness undivided. His substance is numerically one, and so is his selfhood. Nothing in either Testament throws any shadow or haze over the unipersonality of God in the ordinary meaning of the word *person*. This is the one truth as to his mode of existence which the Bible puts beyond all proper question. But it is not much less certainly, though less directly taught that, without three-foldness of substance, there is in the Deity a three-fold consciousness of self. The most ineffable truth of Christianity is that one divine Person is constituted of three quasi Persons. Any other statement is an evasion. Yet this is the unitary truth of Christianity, palpably the foundation of all its truths.

Now the Holy Spirit exhibits every phase of self-consciousness, and so must be considered a person. Quite on the face of our Lord's promise is a recognition of individuality in the Comforter parallel to his own. Jesus is one Comforter, the Holy Spirit is another.<sup>1</sup> So of all his doings. What Jesus in person had said, this the Paraclete would personally recall. He should be sent

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting and not unimportant that our Lord's word for "another" is *ἄλλος* and not *ἕτερος*. The Comforter is another individual, but not an individual of another kind. Here is distinction without difference. *Ἄλλος* is precisely the word for *another*, if that other and Christ were distinct persons in one Godhead.

as a witness to Christ ; and as the Father from whom and the Christ by whom he is to be sent, offer themselves as persons, so the One they will send is personally offered. Such parity of personality is there between Christ and the Spirit that they can come only one at a time.  $\lambda$  Jesus must first go away ; then the Spirit will come personally to convince the world, personally to guide the disciples into the truth, personally to glorify Christ by receiving and showing what is his, as only a personal messenger may. The ages-old, impersonal way of thinking about the Spirit cannot hold out against the stress and strain of the new revelation. The worn thought-form is too well worn to clothe the fresh thought. If the Master's own form of words yields for a moment to the universal feeling embodied in grammar, that spirit is without sex, and calls the Holy Spirit *it*, the stronger feeling for personality in the Paraclete draws his language into subjection ; and so he says, "The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit *which* . . . *he* shall teach you" (John 14 : 26).

We noticed that a distinct person must have thoughts, feelings, and purposes all his own. All these the Holy Spirit has ; and they are not the less his own because he adopts them all from the Father or from Christ. He teaches (John 14 : 26), therefore thinks. That he also feels Paul shows in warning the Ephesians that the Spirit may grieve (4 : 30), and in assuring the Romans that he joys (14 : 17) and loves (15 : 30). It is expressly an exercise of will when he commanded Philip to join the devout treasurer of Candace (Acts 8 : 29), or Peter to visit Cornelius (Acts 10 : 19, 20), or the church at Antioch to commission Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13 : 2,

4), or again and again checks the activity of the missionaries (Acts 16 : 6, 7). Most explicit of all is the sobering and steadying message to the Corinthians, who were covetous of showy gifts, that the selfsame Spirit divides to every man severally "as he will" (1 Cor. 12 : 11). While, then, the personality of the Holy Spirit is less copiously and less cogently taught than any other article in the doctrine of the Trinity, it is conclusively set forth in the New Testament at and after the institution of the Lord's Supper.

### (3) Impersonal Personal

We have now to notice a generally overlooked mingling of old and new conceptions. Of the many references to the Holy Spirit in the Epistles the greater part show this peculiarity. It pervades the elaborate discussion of spiritual gifts in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Here the Spirit is recognizably personal, and yet shown under impersonal aspects. He distributes his gifts, indeed, as he will (12 : 11); but the impulse either to speak in unknown tongues or to prophesy intelligibly must be regulated or even repressed, as though it were a wholly impersonal influence (14 : 26-33). This intermingling of the impersonal and the personal will be so obvious to all observant readers after their attention is once called to it in the Epistles, that we may turn to two cases of unique importance in historical books of the New Testament.

Let us approach the great event of Pentecost with minds open to the possibility that the established Old Testament meaning of *Holy Spirit* is the meaning in the Acts; indeed, feeling certain that it is the meaning

here and everywhere else, unless there are decisive indications to the contrary. The settled and familiar purport would leap to every mind. The burden of proof rests on any one who says it is not the real purport. But if we ought here to turn back to a simpler meaning than the one to which we have grown used, this earlier and neglected meaning will pour new light over the whole story, will cure inveterate misunderstandings, and remove their attendant perplexities.

What leads up to Pentecost? Matthew (3 : 11), John (1 : 33), and Luke in the Acts (1 : 5), speak of baptism in the Holy Spirit. In Matthew and John it is predicted by the Baptist; in the Acts it is promised by Christ. There is no reason to doubt that the baptism referred to in the prophecy of John before the ministry of Jesus began, is the same which was promised by Jesus as his ministry drew toward its close. If so, then the prophecy and the promise were fulfilled together at Pentecost. It is unmistakably Luke's meaning that the gift of that great day is the "power from on high" which Jesus had told his disciples that they should receive "not many days hence."

Now John does not in any way inform us when the Comforter was to come, or did come. He says nothing about Pentecost. The most he tells us is that, after Jesus rose, he breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (20 : 22). John could hardly regard this as the coming of the Comforter, because Jesus had not yet gone, but only as a symbolical repetition of the promise with its attendant authority to bind and loose. Without doubt, then, the promise of the Comforter was fulfilled at Pentecost.

We are thus warranted in maintaining, as we all do, that the Holy Spirit of Pentecost was the personal Paraclete of the Last Supper. But it does not follow that Luke in the Acts presents the Spirit as personal. We must obey the sadly slighted rule of biblical theology and allow Luke to interpret himself. If we permit him this right and flinch not, we shall find him far from representing the Holy Spirit on that great day as personal. "Power from on high" which, according to the Gospel, they were to tarry for (Luke 24 : 49), "power" which, according to the Acts, they should receive through the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1 : 8) was precisely what the Old Testament led them to find in the Spirit of God. Luke's account of what occurred explicitly and continually presents the Spirit as impersonal quite in the Old Testament way. Did he picture to himself and to his readers the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1 : 5) as an immersion in a Person or in an energizing flood? Was the power of the Holy Spirit which came upon the disciples, the power, to Luke's mind, of a diffused Person or of a diffused influence? To the eyes of the amazed lookers-on the tongues of fire, and to their ears the foreign speech, were signs of a Spirit which filled the followers of Jesus (2 : 3, 4); but did any one there present think of that Spirit as a Person so distributed, or not rather as a rushing, mighty wind filling the house, penetrating all who had been waiting there, and turning to lambent flame on the heads of all?

The prodigy was at once explained by Peter; but mark the characteristics of his explanation. It made use throughout of Old Testament ideas, ideas which

his hearers would take in. For Peter the occurrence meant two things : First (2 : 16-18) it was a fulfillment of Joel's prediction, not that a new gift would be granted, but that the old gift of prophecy would be extended to every age and class. Now prophesying was not traced by Joel to a person in a Trinity, neither was it so traced by Peter. For the rest Peter saw in the coming of the Holy Spirit an amazing and triumphant attestation to Jesus. God had approved him, while he lived among the people, by miracles, wonders and signs (2 : 22) ; and now that wicked hands had crucified and slain him, God raised him up, exalted him to his own right hand, and fulfilled his promise to Jesus by shedding forth what they saw and heard. In this last wonder there was no more indication or intimation of a personal Spirit's agency than in the earlier wonders by which God had approved his Son ; and among those earlier wonders there was nothing which any more needed, or was any more referred to a personal Spirit than there had been in the age which was now come to its close. We may be assured that the personal Spirit did all this ; but his personality was not evinced nor spoken of in connection with any of it.

What the pentecostal effusion meant for the church has been endlessly argued in behalf of various ecclesiologies. All has turned on assuming that this effusion was the first coming of the personal Paraclete. The question then is, was his coming at Pentecost a coming once for all ? We may here say that, considered in the only light in which it appears in Luke's account, that is, considered as an impersonal enduement of power for the disciples, and as an impersonal but convincing cre-



dential for Jesus, there is no reason to doubt that the pentecostal gift may be repeated, in behalf of one person or of many, as often as they need or God wills it.

The recognition that Old Testament conceptions survived under New Testament forms, that there can be an impersonal representation of the Holy Spirit, although his personality is not unknown, enables us to understand the more or less frequent presentation of the Spirit of God by certain New Testament writers as the Spirit of Christ. Even Peter, who is not looked to for metaphysical phases of doctrine, speaks of the Spirit of the ancient prophets as "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" (1 Peter 1 : 11). Here Peter apprehends the pre-existence of Christ, his identity with the Holy Spirit, his official superiority to the Spirit by which he inspired the prophets, and, in all these ways, his divinity, a noteworthy series of truths for this particular apostle. John, whose ways of thinking, as well as temperament, seem to have been antipodal to Peter's, John who is at his ease when his mind moves in its highest range; who in the proem to his evangel presents his faith about Christ in strongly contrasted aspects, the ultra speculative and spiritual aspect with the most nearly crass and material; who here has it that the divine Self-expression, the eternal Word, does not merely shine through but *becomes* not merely human but flesh (1 : 1, 14); John, who in his First Epistle makes the eternal life place itself within reach of almost every human sense (1 : 1, 2); who insists that the Son of God came in order to offer the true God to human understanding, and that it was all one to be in the true God and in his Son Jesus Christ (5 : 20); this

bold and tender teacher, who will not let his fusion of extremes be resolved by spiritualizing, but calls any one that would do this antichrist (4 : 3); this deep-seeing, if not wide-ranging apostle, this inspired and accurate evangelist, cannot report to us our Lord's farewell promise of the Comforter without doing it in winsome paradox, making Christ assure the Eleven in one breath, "I will give you another Comforter," and "I will come to you" (14 : 16-18). When Jesus said, "I go away," his next utterance was, "and I return to you" (14 : 28). This is not the final but an immediate return, not a transient greeting in the body by resurrection, but a permanent indwelling by the Spirit. A few moments ago he said, "I go to prepare a place for you" (14 : 2), but now he makes it "Abide in me, and I in you" (15 : 4). He even alleges, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come" (16 : 7); none the less what we have cited is enough to assure us that, as John understood his loved Master, when the Spirit comes Jesus comes.

The exposition of the Holy Spirit's offices is most amply given by Paul in the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of his First Epistle to the Corinthians. Here what the Spirit does and the purpose of his doings, not what he is, are constantly before the mind. No metaphysical hint obtrudes. It is simply the Spirit of God, active in astonishing and ample ways for the mutual profiting of believers. But when Paul treats not of the relation which the Holy Spirit enables Christians to assume and maintain toward one another, but of the bond that the Spirit establishes between the believer and God, then the commanding conception which Paul



held of Christ claims its rights, and the very Spirit of God is with explicitness and emphasis described as the Spirit of Christ. No exposition of this fact could be complete which did not involve such a study of Paul's mind as would lend us his point of view and upward look, and such a study of his heart as would make us glow with his own adoration for the Son of God, whom he was commissioned to preach as the Saviour of men. We must be contented with referring to a few significant utterances.

The prolonged anthem of victory in the eighth of Romans has it that "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death" (8 : 2) ; that we are "in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in us," and that this Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, without which "we are none of his" (ver. 9). These things, as Paul assures the Corinthians, "God has revealed to us by his Spirit" (1 Cor. 2 : 10) by "the Spirit that searches the deep things of God" (ver. 10). These things we also can search, because "we have the mind of Christ" (ver. 16). The Spirit of God which dwells in us is here called "the mind," because it is engaged in the mental operation of knowing. The brethren in Rome were assured that God will make our mortal bodies live by his Spirit that dwells in us (8 : 11) ; the Corinthians, that "the last Adam" is that "life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. 15 : 45). In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians Paul's language is as terse and precise as language can become ; namely, "The Lord is the Spirit" (3 : 17), *ὁ δὲ Κύριος τὸ Πνεῦμά ἐστιν*. We need only mention his *dicta* that it is by the Spirit of the Lord we are transformed into

the image of the Lord (2 Cor. 3 : 18) ; that it is because God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our heart we can cry Abba, Father " (Gal. 4 : 6) ; and that he expects his trials to turn to his account through the prayers of his dear Philippians, "and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1 : 19).

The Corinthians needed instruction about spiritual gifts, and to this need we owe the fullest exposition of these gifts which the New Testament affords. In the course of that exposition Paul for once presents the Spirit as a person who "divides to every one severally as he deliberately wills" (1 Cor. 12 : 11). For the rest, these chapters leave unnoticed the personality, and attend only to the activity, of the Spirit as divine energy. But still the evidence is complete that Paul's habitual conception was that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ. Of the five distinct references to the Comforter in John, references so striking that they seem to be the theme of the entire discourse in which they occur, only one identifies the Holy Spirit with Christ, and all recognize that he is a person ; but the passage which identifies the Comforter with Jesus (John 14 : 16-18) is the only passage of the five which does not state that the Spirit's office is to testify of Christ.

The remarkable conjunction which we have noted of the Spirit's distinctness as a person and identification of him with the personal Christ, may be explained by dogmatic theology as illustrating that the Three Persons of the Godhead are of undivided essence. But dogmatic theology is not in this case biblical theology. There is no indication that John or Paul had in mind any such metaphysical explanation of the difficulty ; nor indeed

that they felt the need of any explanation, or the presence of any difficulty. This fact refers us back at once to conceptions familiar to both apostles. If there was no difficulty to either of them, it was because their statements fell in with obvious facts and could be made in familiar terms. The usual conception that the Spirit of God is in itself the vital energy of God, and in its outer relations is that energy going forth in influence, this conception precisely fits the case before us. The Spirit which energized and directed the life of Jesus as a servant and prophet, now, after his service is at its close, according to John, and his humiliation is past, according to Paul, is known to be his own divine energy, his own divine Spirit. In fact, from the point of view which the old covenant afforded, so soon as the apostles had learned to look upon their Master as divine, there was no other way of regarding his Spirit than as the Spirit of God, nor the Spirit of God as other than the Spirit of Christ. If the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit is obscured by such a presentation of the case, it is but the New Testament's characteristic and customary withdrawal of that metaphysical aspect of the Trinity into the background. Paul and John no doubt sometimes thought of the Spirit of God as a third divine Person, but not, by all signs, habitually; certainly not in the passages which we have been studying, and which make him expressly the Spirit of the Second Person incarnated, or, closer still to the actual thought of these apostles, make the Holy Spirit simply the Spirit of Christ.

An intermingling of impersonal with personal views of the Holy Spirit is found in the solitary passage on

which is built the metaphysical doctrine of the procession of the Spirit. "When the Paraclete is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15 : 26). The phrase, "which proceedeth from the Father," is but a parenthesis; but it bears the load of the occult and audacious doctrine that the innermost relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father is set forth by breath, which is the etymological meaning of the word "spirit." God, this philosophy hath it, from eternity breathes forth the Holy Spirit, and this keeps them both identical in substance and distinct in person. How prodigious a metaphysic to be so facilely substituted for the entirely familiar, entirely unpretentious, unmetaphysical, and habitual Old Testament way of thinking that the Spirit is an effluence from God and an influence on man.

It ought, as mere matter of course, to be admitted that the Old Testament view might possibly recur at this point, and that it would be entirely at home, until forcibly displaced, at any point. How plain then should be the evidence for an ontology of the Godhead so strange, so incomprehensible, so almost weird as the eternal production of the Third Person by breathing! How proper and how reverent our demand that such a significance be not attached to the very words which would be used to state the Old Testament view, unless there is the most cogent reason for finding in those words now a meaning which they had never borne before, and which they are never again employed to present! The whole difficulty is made possible by failure to obey the rule of biblical theology as to the established

meaning of terms. Obeying that rule, we find this classic passage presenting the Spirit in the new guise of a personal Paraclete; while a passing parenthetical clause for a moment recalls the by no means metaphysical but quite familiar picture of an impersonal influence.

An answer to the question whether the Spirit of God ought to be called He or It must be three-fold :

1. If thought of as the Paraclete, the Spirit is thought of as a person, and should be called He.

2. If thought of as divine energy or influence, the Spirit is thought of as impersonal, and should be called It.

3. If thought of as the divine essence, the inmost, vital reality in God, the Spirit is then thought of as indeed personal, but also as sexless, and in strict grammatical propriety is to be called It. I say strict grammatical propriety requires this neuter pronoun in thinking of the divine Spirit as spirit, because usage is uniform in the case of the human spirit when conceived in the same way. The spirit of a man is the essence of the man, and therefore personal; but it is immaterial, and therefore sexless. Theological propriety may seem to require that grammatical propriety be overridden; but it will be only as the good people called Quakers turn *thee* into a nominative, and glorify God by saying "Thee does," or "Thee does not."

It ought not to be overlooked that the doctrine of a Third Person in a Trinity does not in the least express itself in calling the Spirit, as such, He. The Person thus referred to is God, unipersonal, not tripersonal. The Spirit thus referred to is the essential Godhead, not a third aspect of that essence. Thus, when Paul

asks, "Who among men knows the things of the man but the spirit of the man, which is in him?" he is not implying that a man's spirit is a second person distinguishable from the man himself. Paul means that the spirit of a man is the self-knowing, unipersonal man; but as spirit has no sex, Paul calls the man's self-knowing spirit *which*. Then he adds, "So also the things of God no one knows, but the Spirit of God"; and he does not mean that the spiritual, self-knowing essence of God, though personal, is a distinct person in the Godhead. Directly, also, as spirit is sexless, Paul calls the divine Spirit *which* (1 Cor. 2 : 11, 12).

The strictest doctrinal consistency would not seem, then, to require that the orthodox invent new laws of human speech. For if they do this it will not do any good, it will not give expression to their trinitarian faith. Any Jew, when thinking of the divine Spirit as the divine essence, thinks of the Spirit as the personal God; and yet, so thinking, calls the sexless Spirit *It*; while the trinitarian when thinking of the divine Spirit as the divine essence, still is thinking of the Spirit as the personal God, even though he overlooks the Spirit's sexlessness, and violates propriety of both grammar and thought by speaking of *It* as *He*. Really, the soundest trinitarian need not object to the pronouns used in this very connection by Christ and by Paul.



## CHAPTER III

### THE ANSWER OF LIFE

**I**F a good Christian has dealings with God, he may naturally look for indications that the Spirit of God is with him. The question just now is, can our lives afford evidence that the Holy Spirit is a person? May we know by experience, as those twelve men at Ephesus did not, "whether there is any Holy Ghost," in the New Testament sense of the term? Jesus taught that the world does not know the Comforter, and cannot receive him because it does not see him. "But ye know him," said Christ, "because he dwells with you, and is in you" (John 14 : 17).

#### 1. Known as In Us?

What sign does he give that he is present in person? What sign does our neighbor give? Only an impression upon our senses. We become aware of our neighbor's nearness by touch; or light reflected from him may strike the eye; or air waves, which we call his voice, may beat on the ear, as waves from a passing steamer beat against the small boat in which we are sitting. In any case we know that somebody is close by only through effects which are sensibly produced in ourselves. If certain familiar groups of effects occur, we say that our well-known neighbor is at hand.

How, then, may we be certain that these effects are not produced in us by our own fancy? Sometimes

effects similar to these are so produced. A light glows in the eye, because I am pressing the eyeball. Sounds annoy the ear, when a disease or a drug is giving a fillip to the auditory nerve. We may seem to see, hear, and feel our neighbor—all in a dream. How, then, can we tell that sensations of the broad day are not a dream? If we are only inferring outside causes for inside effects, the assurance which we feel has all the precariousness of an inference. To be candid, we cannot prove that we sense realities, we can only know that we do. We cannot prove any first truth, but we may intuitively know it. A theory which explains away knowledge explains itself away. That self and not-self exist is a first truth. We know each in knowing the other. We do not know self as affected, merely inferring not-self as cause; but we know self affected, just when we know not-self affecting.

Jesus said that we should know the Holy Spirit as within. My neighbor makes an impression on me from without; what if he could impress me from within? Would I then have to say that I do not so know him at all? If the Holy Spirit effects results in me, why may I not claim as truly to know him as though the effects were produced on the outside of me? The world does not know him because it sees him not; if it saw him, would it know him better than we can know him by his indwelling?

The answer is obvious; but it does not cover the whole ground. The question yet remains, whether my knowledge is knowledge of the Spirit's personality, or only of his impersonal influence. And to deal with this issue will be to open a still more radical issue. At the



outset we ought to admit that we cannot know the three Persons of the Trinity apart in consciousness. Roman Catholics wisely postpone this "beatific vision" to the heavenly estate. It may be that the offices of the Trinity may be distinguished even now; but this is not to say that the offices are so distinct as to justify the claim, "I can tell that this is the Father and not the Spirit, or the Spirit and not the Son, at work in me."

## 2. Known as Distinct from Us?

Now the more radical question arises whether I can actually so much as distinguish the Holy Spirit from myself. Surely, I do not distinguish two personal spirits busy in my breast, my own spirit for one, and the Spirit of God, or of Satan, for the other. Surely, every instructed Christian must say, "Although I am well aware of strange movings within me, I recognize them, and wonder at them, as movings of my own spirit. Inasmuch as I perceive nothing but my own *psychosis*, I am conscious of only my own *psychic*. I rejoice to *infer*, but can no more than infer, that the good Spirit of God has begotten this heavenly life in my poor soul." For, in truth, there is a difference between knowing the physical and knowing the spiritual. I know the physical not-me as affecting the physical me; but the spiritual me I know only as affected, without distinguishing the spiritual not-me which causes the effect.

Since, then, we cannot distinguish the Holy Spirit from our own spirit, we are unable with psychological propriety to claim immediate perception of the Holy Spirit's personality. The phenomena of any man's spiritual experience, no matter how extraordinary, how

entirely unprecedented, how startling, and how unaccountable, would fail to justify even so much as belief that they were produced by the Spirit of God, if the New Testament had not promised this. Otherwise we would be obliged, in all propriety, to ascribe them all to the recuperative energy of the human will, or to the delusiveness of human imagination. Transactions in the soul of a man, quite as remarkable as any ordinary works of the Holy Spirit, are now and then effected by a sudden clearing of moral vision, and a sudden response of self-control, or by prompt and wise submission to the control of others. But devout Christians are warranted in taking the position that their own lives correspond to the New Testament account of the matter, illustrate the promised help, and corroborate the doctrine of the Helper's personality.

We need not leap to the conclusion that, while we ourselves have no means of distinguishing between our own spirits and the Spirit of God, inspired men, once upon a time, had such means. It is not that their consciousness furnished a doctrine of which our consciousness is incapable; but that they and we received from Christ himself—that is by objective revelation, not from subjective inference—the promise of the Spirit's offices. He was to regenerate, this Nicodemus was told; he was to be an unfailing Helper, this was the final promise to the faithful Eleven; and the promise of these offices was substantiated partly by miraculous and external signs, which in those days followed the imposition of hands, but chiefly and permanently, for us and for them alike, by experience of the new birth, and by "fruits of the Spirit" suitable to the new life.

Whether or not new truth on this subject was revealed during apostolic days, gifts of the Spirit then abounded; they were led into knowledge on other sacred matters; and we can hardly venture to believe that their illumination and insight is surpassed by our own. Folly lies that way.

We find the New Testament teaches the Spirit's personality, ascribes to him distinctly personal activities, and our experience gathers the fruit of these activities for ourselves. Even in setting up so moderate a claim we must not overlook that for the doctrine of personality in the Spirit we shall have to depend on general representations of the New Testament rather than specific texts. In the Epistles sanctification is much more treated of than regeneration, and more definitely ascribed to dealings with the personal Paraclete. When Jesus said that we must be born of the Spirit, he did not expect Nicodemus would understand it of a personal Spirit, for such a Spirit was as yet unheard of; but Nicodemus would know him to be speaking of an energy from God contrasted with energy of "the flesh" (John 3 : 3-8). Similarly when Paul writes to Titus concerning "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit," he at once describes that Spirit quite impersonally as "poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3 : 5, 6). This but illustrates the statement, made above, that the personality of the Holy Spirit is less copiously taught in the sacred Scriptures than any other article in the doctrine of the Trinity. And there is an unmistakable correspondence between the amount and the need of authoritative statement under this head. The person-

ality of the Spirit would be conspicuous, if his offices were all conspicuously personal.

We make, then, a two-fold admission; namely, that the personality of the Holy Spirit is not directly recognizable in experience, and that it is with comparative scantiness, though adequately, taught in the New Testament. But such an admission, however fair, may not unnaturally give pain to pious souls. Let us, then, make haste to add that for any deficiency on the point of doctrine there is a large, a much larger compensation in point of practice. This is true as to the representations of the New Testament, and much more as to the teachings of experience.

Touching the New Testament's habit of viewing the case may we not feel sure that the impersonal "power of the highest" which begat Jesus would be adequate for our rebegetting? Or, imagining the utmost profit which could come to us if the Bible continually kept to the front the personality of the Spirit, what would we find that advantage consisted in except to imply what is now directly taught, namely, effective divine influence over us? Fancy, if the fancy is pleasing, how keen delight an explicit and steady assurance of the Spirit's personality might afford; fancy how much courage before men and fidelity before God might have been derived from a way of putting the facts different from the way followed in the New Testament, if one has the temerity to indulge in such a fancy; and would there not be a net loss from such a change? I think it will so appear as we consider the light which experience throws upon the doctrine. Let us see.

If we knew the Holy Spirit as a person, that is, if we knew him as apart from ourselves, we would not truly know him at all. He is our Helper ; he could not so help us then. What would it be worth to us if the notable movements of the life within us were his movements, not ours ? Do we need that the Holy Spirit should feel grieved about our sinfulness, should yearn for holiness in us, should arouse his will to serve God, should himself repose on God in faith, or glow toward our fellow-men with love ? For us is it not the important matter that we ourselves should do all this, and that the Spirit's part should be to cause us so to do ? If we only recognized him as personally distinct from us, not ourselves as influenced by him, we would have to miss the best which he now does for us, and the most we yet need to have him do.

Some years ago a large steam engine all of glass was exhibited about the country. When it was at work one could see the piston and the valves go ; but no one could see what made them go. When steam is hot enough to be a continuous, elastic vapor, it is invisible ; when it is cool enough to be seen, it is nothing but so much fog, a tea-kettle cloud, a damp and depressing aggregate of innumerable, minute, and quite separate drops. It has lapsed from one of the mightiest and most serviceable agents of man into the weakest and most useless form which water can take. It is nothing but mist. The silly fellow who could deny that he knew anything about steam, because he did not see it in the cylinder, would be denying that he knew the one thing in steam most worth knowing, the mysterious energy which runs our machinery, and now and then

flings the top off a mountain. Thus pitiful the testimony to the Holy Spirit yielded by the Christian life, if we had to know the Spirit as a person, a being within us apart from ourselves. In this case, as in case of so many Christian doctrines, the realities which bear the test of scrutiny are worth infinitely more than all the dear fancies that melt away under its gaze.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TRINITY

THE problem of the Trinity need not be discussed, but ought to be noticed in a general study of the Holy Spirit.

We pass by the attempts to construe a divine ontology out of a human ontology, for these attempts contradict all ontology, human and divine. It is true that we are conscious of self only because conscious of that which is not self. And so, if God from eternity was both Father and Son, he might from eternity exercise that self-consciousness without which he could not seem to us a person. But why the Spirit was needed as a means of communication between Father and Son it is not easy to see unless the First and Second Persons are less spiritual than the Third, or the Third less personal than the Second and First. Similar difficulties are met in arguing triplicity in unity from the love which is of the very nature of God.

The New Testament as practical, not theoretical, gives us only the "economic Trinity." It expounds the divine "housekeeping" when his dwelling-place is man. That God is one was taught the Hebrew people by disastrous experience of polytheism and by the self-commending truth in monotheism. We too are so constituted as to respond to this doctrine with spiritual joy and to abhor any impairment of it. We experience its truth. But we may also trace in the Gospels the



growing conviction that Jesus was divine until he became an object of worship, and in the Epistles we find him credited as the author of a divine salvation, the source of a life which is no other than life in God. I think we need not hesitate to say that Paul here and there breaks through his habits of speech and fairly calls Christ God (Rom. 9 : 5 ; Titus 2 : 13 ; comp. with the essentially Pauline Epistle to the Hebrews, 1 : 8). John opens his Gospel with stating that the Word was God and at its close records an out and out confession of his Lord's deity by Thomas (1 : 1 ; 20 : 28). There was not, there is not, any standing up against the divinity of Christ on the part of those who have intimate dealings with him. No one now denies the divinity of the Holy Spirit. It could be only a freak to interpret the Bible as meaning that the Spirit of God is a creature. And the offices which the Spirit has to fulfill are so clearly personal that his personality always presses itself into the Christian's conception. There is one God, and yet Father, Son, and Spirit are alike divine and personal.

Now why has not the church left the matter here, where the New Testament left it? Why has it not been satisfied, why is it not to-day satisfied, with an economic Trinity, no more, no less? It could not be. It never could, it cannot now. How avoid asking about Christ all the questions, one after another, which have arisen concerning him? He himself started the question, Whom do men say that I am? And whom say ye that I am? Well, then, how afterward evade like questions about the Holy Spirit?

It is precisely because the divine economy revealed facts as to God which can be grouped and viewed

together that we must attempt such a grouping and view. We agree that in the ordinary meaning of the word a person has substance all his own and a consciousness that he is distinct from all other beings. In this usual sense God is one person and only one. The Old Testament had much ado to get it believed and the New Testament never in the least calls the unipersonality of the Godhead in question. But when we find that both Christ and the Spirit are conscious of selfhood as well as of divinity, knowing that they must not be regarded as distinct gods, are we not shut up to the conclusion, when we put all these facts together, that in the one undivided Godhead there is a three-fold personal distinction? This is going to the extreme verge of a possible metaphysical definition. Every effort has been made to stop short but in vain. If the mind flies away it is inevitably drawn back. It cannot stay away from the position that God is one and indivisible, while Christ and the Spirit are somehow personal and properly divine. It is what they do that makes us think so. It is their offices which give the doctrine of the Trinity its perennial vigor. Now their offices are distinctively Christian, and so the trinitarian theory of how Father, Son, and Spirit are related belongs to the very genius of Christianity.

This theory need not affirm more than identity of substance and distinctness of selfhood. Reason is confounded by what it must affirm, but reason need not attempt any explanation as to how these relations in the Godhead come to exist. It need not allege eternal generation of the Son, either immanent or voluntary; it need not agree to eternal procession of the Spirit,

whether from the Father only or from the Father and the Son ; but Christian experience is so explicit about the facts and reason so persists in putting the facts together that we are forced to hold, if we hold to practical Christianity, that the Three are God and that God is One. Or, if we look to the statements of the New Testament writers, which are all held close to what they know and we know by experience, so significant are the terms in which they describe the economic Trinity that the question is whether the minds of those writers discovered none of the ontological implications of their own language.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WAYS OF THE SPIRIT

#### 1. The Issue

**I**MPORTANT doctrinal implications go with an answer to the question whether the Holy Spirit works directly or by an instrument. The straitest sect of Calvinism holds that regeneration is without means, because the carnal mind cannot accept the truth. An incautious view of sanctification teaches the direct uplift of the soul without the use of means into a new plane of living. It is just as natural that an opposite school of theology, which emphasizes freedom of the will, should regard the human will as co-operative with the Divine Spirit, and the Divine Spirit as operative through the truth.

Each side has its merits. A comprehensive view would be more accurate than either of the partial views. The Holy Spirit acts in both ways, immediately and mediately, on different occasions and for ascertainable reasons. When those occasions are determined, and the reason for the Spirit's ways is understood, then a degree of order and even unity is reached in the explication of this confused and confusing branch of our theme.

#### 2. Occasional

At the grand epochs the Spirit of God acts directly. Such epochs are the creation of the worlds, the establishment and re-establishment of the theocracy, the

founding of Christianity, and the final consummation. At each of these periods the Spirit's work is miraculous. The primal creation was a stupendous miracle. The theocracy was set up, and kept up, by mighty miracles. The begetting of Jesus was the supremely gracious miracle, while miracles corresponding to this were needed and were wrought in order to lay well the foundations of Christianity. The final state will be introduced by a miracle which has no successor, the miracle of the general resurrection. All these grand miracles are familiarly accredited by Scripture to the Spirit of God (*cf.* Gen. 1 : 2 ; Isa. 63 : 11 ; Zech. 4 : 6 ; Luke 1 : 35 ; Heb. 2 : 4 ; Rom. 8 : 11). In performing them natural agencies may or may not be used. In any case God lays his hand either on these agencies, or on the object on which the recognized miracle is wrought, and by his direct efficiency subdues both things and forces to his purpose. It was the sheer power of the Spirit which "called things that are not as though they were" ; which provided the supernatural aids of the exodus, and credentials of the prophets ; which begat the Son of God, showed by many infallible proofs whose son he was, that his apostles were God's messengers, his church God's people, and which at length will destroy the last enemy. No instrument did or could intervene between the divine energy and the miracle. What his energy did to an instrument *was* the miracle ; what it did *through* an instrument brought the miracle to light.

### 3. Ordinary

But if extraordinary occasions required direct intervention of the Spirit, and this we must in all candor not

only admit but maintain, it is equally clear that for his ordinary purposes, for his habitual and ruling ends, if we may call them so, the objects for which the mission of the Comforter is a continual and recognized provision, he works through the instrumentality of the truth. His service for men may be summed up in two familiar words, regeneration and sanctification. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John 6:63); but Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that they were "begotten through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15); Peter says the scattered saints were "begotten again by means of the word of God" (1 Peter 1:23); and James has it that the "Father of lights . . . of his own will begat us by the word of truth" (1:18).

Sanctification too is "of the Spirit" (1 Peter 1:2); but also, as Paul states the matter, "in belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13); and Peter lays the process open in a way to satisfy a modern theologian: "ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit" (1 Peter 1:22). Peter, one dares to say, had not forgotten the prayer of our Lord for his disciples, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). It ought to seem to us quite natural that Jesus again and again should style the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).

So to apply the truth is suitable to the Spirit who reveals it, and to man for whom it is revealed. All effects on character are produced through the mediation of ideas. We live for that which we have thought about. We care for and act for nothing else. No emotion stirs the soul, no resolve, good or bad, is taken by the will, if all ideas are wanting. The cold touch of thought warms

the heart, as potassium is set on fire by an icicle ; and nothing but thought can do this. And so—

*The continuous, all-inclusive office of the Holy Spirit is to minister the truth*, either by revealing or applying it. This is now his way. This is his way in all that in this life we may look for from him. When we are dead in sins, and he quickens us ; when we walk after the Spirit, and the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us ; when he helps our infirmities and makes intercession for us ; when we have access unto the Father by him ; when we enter the kingdom of peace and joy in him ; when the earnest of the inheritance becomes ours by his sealing ; when we grow unto an holy temple in the Lord and are builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit ; when the brotherhood, being zealous of spiritual gifts, seeks to excel to the edifying of the church ; when the church, built up and compacted, sends forth the gospel in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance ; whensoever and so long as the Spirit and the bride shall say come, and while men that are athirst continue to come, until the end comes, and he that raised up Christ from the dead quickens our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in us, and Christ finally delivers up the kingdom to God, and the ministry of the Spirit is ended, from his first up to his last office for us, it is the Spirit's good and wholesome way to achieve all that he does through the ministry of the truth.

I hope no one will think this belittles the work of the Spirit, or will fancy that he knows of a better way. As we found that the Spirit does most for us by setting our own faculties at work, not by figuring in our con-



sciousness as a person apart from ourselves, so his best method of setting our faculties to their work must be one which is in harmony with the laws of our mental and moral constitution. If he does not act in accord with these laws, he acts against them. Mental and moral laws can neither be superseded nor suspended. The result of doing it in the one case would be insanity, in the other case it would be sin. Let us once clearly see, and we are not likely ever to forget that the highest results are normal results. We shall then be well satisfied to let the Holy Spirit do what he does for us by ministering to us the truth; that is, through the operation of right thoughts; that is, normally. The most momentous, and possibly the most abrupt, conversion which Christianity has known was that of Saul of Tarsus. It was accomplished by the sudden revelation of new truth. So obstinate in error was Saul that it took literally "a knockdown argument" to persuade him. His soul could be reached only by overpowering his body; but by the truth thus physically conveyed he was at once convinced and transformed. He did not confess sin, nor profess faith; he asked: "What shall I do, Lord?" In his phrase to the Galatians, "he obeyed the truth" (3 : 1); and ever after, throughout that apostolic service in which historic Christianity began, it was "by manifestation of the truth that Paul commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4 : 2). "His speech and his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power"; and thus it came to pass, for us as for Corinthians, that "faith may stand in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2 : 4, 5).

#### 4. The Explanation

It ought now to be plain why the Holy Spirit wrought directly at the grand epochs, and why between them he works by the instrumentality of truth. In the work of creation, of founding the Hebrew nation, of redemption, and of final consummation the Spirit of God acts upon matter; throughout the intervening periods he acts upon mind. Even when his office was to set up the kingdom of God among men, miracle was requisite, and miracle is an effect wrought on physical objects. But it was, is, and always will be germane to effects on rational spirits that these should be produced by means of convictions. Now a conviction is a felt thought. To impress the right thoughts, to make them felt, is an office than which no other could be more suitable to the Holy Spirit, or more vitally important to men. If the instrumentality of truth is excluded from operations upon nature alone, it is indispensable to changes wrought in souls.

I confess that for some time after recognizing the ministry of truth as now the all-comprehending office of the Holy Spirit, it was not without reluctance that I found ascribed to him activities in which the truth had no part. So appropriate to the Spirit of God is it to reign over minds and in hearts, that his direct action upon matter appeared less fitting, and even incongruous. But it could not be disguised that the Bible attributes to the Spirit works in the physical sphere. How ought this seeming anomaly to be understood? How could it be explained? It relieves the difficulty in part to note that these interpositions in the physical sphere were but occasional, while the Spirit's operations in the

moral sphere are constant. But those occasional interpositions came in groups; and after this has been noticed, the problem rapidly finds its solution. These groups of direct acts upon nature are found, as we have seen, at the great turning-point in the history not only of this world, but of all worlds. At supreme crises special exhibitions of the supreme Ruler's power were not only justifiable but necessary. They were miracles; and he who refuses to consider the possibility of miracles forgets that man is body as well as spirit, that his soul can be reached through his senses, that he needs to perceive how God, a being supreme at least in power, is demanding his immediate attention. Above all, the objector fails to take into account how far God is willing to go when necessary, in his concern for men. Note these facts, and miracle becomes credible, its entire absence incredible. If then miracles are ascribed to the Spirit of God, it is in cases when, although the Spirit may be identifiably the personal Paraclete, he is figuring as a divine energy. God would call attention to himself, and at that juncture a miracle is his call.

Giving full recognition, then, to the ministration of truth as the regular function of the Holy Spirit, as the function for the sake of which every occasional function is but a transient and subsidiary provision, we may now employ this generic office for the correction of persistent and not harmless errors, for the intelligible exposition of detailed offices, and also as a principle of classifying and unifying the operations of the Holy Spirit ages ago with his activities in modern times.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TWO ERAS

WE are justified in holding that we live in the era of the Holy Spirit. That the Spirit is in a new and dominant relation to the people of God is certified by the prediction of John the Baptist that, unlike himself, Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit ; by Christ's own promise of an enduement of power through that baptism ; by his plain statement that the Comforter's mission could not begin until he himself had withdrawn ; by his assurance that the presence of the Comforter would be more expedient for them than his own ; by putting off their witness to him until the new relation to the Holy Spirit had formally begun ; by the change which Pentecost made in the apostles ; by the important place that spiritual gifts held in the minds of the early Christians, and the careful discussion and instruction concerning these gifts which was left by Paul ; finally, by the distinctly spiritual character of Christianity as contrasted with Mosaism. This new character is due primarily, it is true, to the fulfillment of types in the Antitype ; but secondarily to the administration of Christianity by the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of the truth turns, of course, on the truth to be ministered. If the range of its applicability in ancient times was narrow, the Spirit's service then was narrow ; if its present range is wide, our opportunity for spiritual good is equally wide.

### 1. The Old Era—Ministry by Symbols

Under the old dispensation its scope was hardly so restricted that it could not serve as instrument of the new birth. God seems never to have been without a child among men. What may have been that "better thing provided for us," of moment so great that the ancient worthies "apart from us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11 : 40), we perhaps cannot satisfy ourselves, certainly not others; but men could ever "come to God," because they could "believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him out" (Heb. 11 : 6). The "elders obtained a good report," and their pious songs are not only the utterance of renewed hearts, but the fittest utterance ever made. The great cloud of testifiers tell us what faith can do for men who run a race, and assure us that, in "the race which is set before us," truth is the guide of faith.

But for those far-away times the truth was embodied in symbols. So embodied, truth is at a great disadvantage. Religious truth set in symbols is for priests, or at most for a priestly people. Ceremonies were for such only as had ceremonial fitness; and to be excluded from all part in the ceremonies was to be excluded from a share in the truth. The prevailing thought about the only true God was that Jehovah cared for his people Israel, and was hostile to all Gentiles. The religion according to whose standards a single race was pure, and all other races defiled, could not but make "the heathen rage," leaving them to expect that the Lord would "have them in derision, and vex them in his sore displeasure." No abatement, in a few Hebrew thinkers, of this stern exclusiveness ever

was at home in the Hebrew spirit, nor in the Levitical system. The feeling of aloofness on the part of the Chosen People made them detestable to other peoples ; and the Levitical system could never impart to Gentiles an assurance that the truths, locked up in ceremonies which they were not allowed to share, were, after all, truths intended for the uncircumcised. In thus restricting the applicability of the truth, the religion of Jehovah so far shut out the Holy Spirit from the minds of "aliens to the commonwealth of Israel." With strictest deference to facts Paul might call upon Gentile Christians in Ephesus to remember that they had been "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2 : 12).

A symbolical religion is hardly less disastrous, in the long run, to those who take part in its observances. The more a symbol embodies, the less it imparts. The more it means, the less it tells. We have greater reason to dread the religious use of a crucifix than of a cross. It is likely that intelligent heathenism has sometimes intended no worse by its images than Rome now intends. It would not bid people accept idols as gods, but only as hints at what the gods are. If the idols are grotesque, the hint is the plainer. How dreadful must be those superhuman beings which look like that, or, worse still, actually are like that. Yet the propensity to take the image for the object imagined, the sign for the idea signified, has not been successfully withstood by any symbolical religion. It is often the case that the more faithful the devotee, the more deleterious the religion. This was true even of Judaism. Paul stood out against imposing its laws on Gentile



Christians as a perversion of the gospel. "The hand-writing of ordinances," he said, "was against us. Christ had blotted it out." What could the Holy Spirit accomplish for those very religious Hebrews who had fallen into the way of doing what they had to do, and thinking no more about it? His help had to be as meagre as the truth he could make them think. Phariseeism is a natural outgrowth of Levitical zeal. Legalism sinks inevitably into formalism, and formalism is fatal to spirituality. When it is taken up with tithing all manner of herbs, it finds little zest in weightier matters.

The priesthood can never be counted on to save a formal religion from formalism. The sacred ministers of a sacrosanct ceremonial will be the last to lighten its burdens or simplify its ritual. To diminish "the offices" would be to minify their own office, and not even Paul could be expected to do that with his apostolate (Rom. 11:13). Sacerdotalism goes with sacramentalism. Like horses harnessed in span, each must drag the other, unless the other will pull his own share. One can hardly be priest to his household, serve at "the family altar," and "say grace before meat," yet never happen upon the lurking suggestion as to each of his pious observances, that, when it's done, it's done with. Could we at all understand how the nineteenth and one hundred nineteenth psalms sing as they do about the law of the Lord, if the "law which converteth the soul, if the testimony which maketh wise the simple, if the statutes which rejoice the heart, the commandment which enlighteneth the eyes," all of them "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb"—if all these re-



ferred to the Levitical prescriptions about purifications, and restrictions about meats? Surely the psalmist had more than that code in mind when he ended his song with the lofty and simple aspiration, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah, my rock and my redeemer" (19 : 14). It is not, then, to the ceremonial law nor to its priests that we must look, if we would find what was the most and best that the Holy Spirit could do under the old dispensation. This we find by turning to quite another type of Old Testament Scripture.

## **2. The Old Era—Ministry by Prophecy**

The prophetic writings, dealing with particular situations and correspondent to New Testament Epistles, the Psalms, wisdom literature, and histories, which are for all time, these set forth thoughts, and show us how rich materials the Holy Spirit provided and had at command ages ago for his service to human souls. Types and ceremonies our Lord could fulfill and set aside; but in fulfilling the demands of this other gift of inspiration, he sanctified it for perpetual use. The old Bible was the tutor of his childhood, the counselor and support of his manhood, and the Spirit which gave it has never given anything better, in its line, for man's instruction and support. The Psalms are still the model hymns of love and praise, the ideal prayers for forgiveness and help, while Isaiah is evangelical as Paul, and even tenderer than John. The Hebrew people enjoyed a devotional literature, much of which, for largeness of view and persuasiveness of appeal, equals any that the Holy Spirit has given since Pentecost, and places the ancient

people on an equality with us, except as the meaning of their own Scriptures was opened and fulfilled by the mission of Christ. In this last particular the greatest of their prophets was less than the least in the kingdom of heaven.

How well the prophetic writings lend themselves to the service of the Holy Spirit becomes yet more evident when we take into account the essentially progressive nature of thought, and the often startling independence exhibited by the prophets. Religious thought is fertile. Ideas lead on. An idea dwelt upon seems more and more important. It suggests implications, and it suggests too, its own opposite. The more we emphasize it to ourselves, the more distinctly we see its hostile converse. But the humblest truth has mighty allies and noble kindred. One who is intimate enough with a humble truth will by and by find himself in great company. Hold before the mind any just conception of divine things, and as one gazes at it it grows transparent. Vistas open through it. The outlook is backward, forward, and to every side. The idea becomes telescopic, and the vision is limited only by the dimness of one's own eyes. Let whoever doubts this try a steady gaze through the magic glass of a true thought.

A real thinker is bound to be radical. He may not deny what other thinkers have reported. He too may find the very things that they have found. No wayfarer in these Holy Lands need travel all the way alone. Yet every diligent and reverent student of religious truth feels that, for himself, he must trace its roots as far as he can. Therefore he is a radical, however con-

servative ; indeed, is truly conservative when radically conservative. Radicalism is the only trusty conservatism. If one takes up a position without having gone thoroughly into the subject, some fact which he has overlooked may be used for his overthrow. The prophets rarely flinched. If God had not inspired them, still as the loftiest thinkers of their times they would have been leaders of men's spirits. But God inspired them. It was he who led them on and on ; and so his Spirit by his prophets leads us on, and ever on. If we have come to a stand, we first dismissed our Leader, and ceased to think.

How stirring was the leadership of the " Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets " we may be able to estimate when we find them scouting the law, and crying up that true and loyal obedience to God himself, which legalism never sprang from nor led to. Their attitude was often the reverse of that which was uniformly taken by the priests. No priest could have found it in his heart to decry " the law of a carnal commandment," even for the sake of exalting " the power of an endless life " (Heb. 7 : 16) ; but when Paul or the writer to the Hebrews does this, he but repeats in the new era what the powerful impulse of the Spirit led the prophets of the old era to do again and again. Samuel was the first great prophet after Moses, the only one like Moses in effecting a complete political revolution, for he unified the nation under a king. It was a long step toward modernity ; but nothing more antique is found in the Old Testament than Samuel's wrath against Saul for sparing Agag, king of the Amalekites, and all except the " vile and refuse." " What meaneth this bleat-

ing of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" He will not listen to Saul's excuse that he had himself destroyed the Amalekites, but "the people took of the spoil to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God." And Samuel said, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15 : 22).

At a later day what a wrench to regard for the law must have been experienced by "Asaph the Seer" before he wrote the fiftieth Psalm :

Hear, O my people, and I will speak ;  
 O Israel, and I will testify unto thee :  
 I am God, even thy God.  
 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices ;  
 And thy burnt offerings are continually before me.  
 I will take no bullock out of thy house,  
 Nor he-goats out of thy folds.  
 For every beast of the forest is mine,  
 And the cattle upon a thousand hills.

· · · · ·  
 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee ;  
 For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.  
 Will I eat the flesh of bulls,  
 Or drink the blood of goats ?  
 Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving ;  
 And pay thy vows unto the Most High.

(Ps. 50 : 7-14.)

In what essential does this differ from David's *misere-  
 re*?

Thou delightest not in sacrifice ; else would I give it :  
 Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering.  
 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit :  
 A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.  
 (Ps. 51 : 16, 17.)

This in turn only echoes what is quoted by the New Testament from another psalm concerning Christ, though the psalm itself was far from limiting it to the Messiah. It is a psalm of thankfulness and of a trust which is bold to search the mind of God :

Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in ;  
Mine ears hast thou opened ;  
Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.  
Then said I, Lo, I am come ;  
In the roll of the book it is written of me :  
I delight to do thy will, O my God ;  
Yea, thy law is within my heart.

(Ps. 40 : 6-8.)

Will some one say that these psalms looked to the final sacrifice, that they placed on the Lamb of God the trust which no Levitical lamb deserved? But there is no such intimation. Will another maintain that the Levitical ceremonies imparted those ultimate truths which here came to utterance? Nothing like this is hinted, but the reverse. These hymnists may actually owe to Levitical sacrifices the truths in the name of which they repudiated those sacrifices ; but they repudiated them. They saw only contrast. The law and the prophets were not always of one mind. The psalmist prophets set at naught the law. Their independence sometimes amounted to antagonism.

It is noteworthy that such is not the attitude of the Epistle to the Hebrews. This Epistle puts Christ above the law, but makes what he does the law's consummation. This is the salient point in the Epistle's discussion concerning the annual Day of Atonement. The high priest, left alone in the temple on that great day,

went into the Holy of Holies, and by sprinkling the mercy seat with the blood of a sin offering, made atonement for the people, made good all arrears, provided for every "error of the people" not otherwise provided for (Lev. 16). But Christ, the true high priest, entered for us the true tabernacle, and "by his own blood obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9 : 12). In the ancient ritual of the *Yom Kippur* the exclusion of all but the high priest from the tabernacle signified that his act took the place of all that others could do. In the ritual of our redemption, when Christ "by one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10 : 14), he did away with the law by fulfilling it. So that the law itself provided for tearing down the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles. But the psalmist saw nothing of this sort.

Did those whom we more familiarly call *prophets*? Not Isaiah, nor Jeremiah, nor Hosea, nor Micah. Thus Isaiah opens his prophecy :

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith Jehovah. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. . . When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me. . . Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well. . . Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isa. I : 11-18).

Hear then Jeremiah :

I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt

offerings or sacrifices : but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people (Jer. 7 : 22, 23).

Hosea is sententious :

I desire mercy and not sacrifice ;

And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

(Hosea 6 : 6.)

But it is Micah who wrote the typical and best remembered challenge for men disposed to make a fetish of their rites :

Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah,

And bow myself before the high God ?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,

With calves of a year old ?

Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams,

With ten thousands of rivers of oil ?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,

The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ?

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ;

And what doth Jehovah require of thee,

But to do justly, and to love mercy,

And to walk humbly with thy God ?

(Micah 6 : 6-8.)

It is not a question here whether this was sheer legalism. We need not consider whether it describes any other righteousness than that which Moses described, "The man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom. 10 : 5). Christ had not yet been set forth as "the end of the law for righteousness" (Rom. 10 : 4). But these prophets, one and all, insist on righteousness. They place it where Christ in the Ser-



mon on the Mount places it, in realities, not in forms, and lay, like him, in ethical truth an indispensable basis for spiritual well-being. It would be even truer to say, alike of these prophets and of the great Teacher, that they made spiritual well-being to consist in righteousness. In their bold, unwavering independence of Mo-saism, and in their equal faithfulness to the essence of all true piety, they equipped the minds of men with truth by which the Holy Spirit could mold their lives and lead them toward the full revelation in Christ. Like the Sermon on the Mount, they tell us not so much how to attain the true life, as what the true life is when attained.

### 3. The Old Era—Ministry by Wisdom

But the precise functions of priesthood and prophecy as to the truth, with the corresponding opportunity thus afforded to the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times, become yet clearer when contrasted, as both are, with a third class of ideas and method of presentation. These are found in the so called "wisdom literature." It is a form of literature which exhibits the correspondence of the Hebrew mental habits to those of other Eastern peoples, and sometimes reveals rather close relations between the chosen nation and another quite alien in race and genius. In a general way the wisdom books are the least religious, the most worldly in the Old Testament, and have secured correspondingly the lowest degree of reverence. Merely historical writings may have a more distinctly religious importance and be decidedly more of prophetic type. Indeed, the more important histories were credited to a prophet.

The Orientalism of the wisdom writings appeared now and then in the fable form, as in Jotham's witty apologue of the trees in search of a king (Judg. 9 : 7-15). It was quite at home in the shrewd and often caustic proverbs. An infusion of the very different Greek way of thinking is recognized by some in that highly poetical passage of the book of Proverbs which represents Wisdom as the first creature of God and his joyous companion, but one that especially delighted in, and was eager to teach, the sons of men (Prov. 8). The wisdom writings' took up the great problem of suffering and retribution. Hence the majestic epic of Job and the gloomy musings of Ecclesiastes. The wise men, after the captivity, devoted formal study to the law and built up fences around it. They figure in New Testament times as lawyers and scribes. Their writings remain to us among the Old Testament apocrypha and in the vast compilations of precepts and commentaries known as the Talmud. Whatever the theme of a wisdom writing, whether secular or religious ; whatever its form, condensed or expanded ; whether proverb and precept, fable or epic, commentary or speculation, it was the product of intense intellectual activity. The law prescribed forms of approach to God, prophecy brought a message from God, wisdom studied out the lessons which might be extracted from revelation and from life. Law, when most benignant, conferred a priestly benediction ; prophecy, at its loftiest, saw the face of Jehovah and listened to his voice, but wisdom reflected, weighed, and defined. Its offices were much more akin to those of Christian exegesis, theology, and ethics than were those of the prophet. The writer of Ecclesiastes called

himself the *Preacher*, and such he was. He said, "All is vanity"; "he was wise, and still taught the people knowledge"; "he pondered . . . and sought to find out acceptable words," like his present-day successor, yet he could show himself sane and faithful enough to reach this "end of the matter: fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12 : 13). The law might make its devotee superstitious; devotion to prophetic writings could lead the mystic into fanaticism; wisdom would try to keep the people prudent and orthodox, but tended to leave them self-complacent and rationalistic. Yet it is easy to see that by the wide scope of its topics wisdom provided for the touch of the Holy Spirit upon all the phases and functions of human life.

#### 4. The Transition—Christ had Better Go

In comparing the old and new eras our notice is challenged at the outset by the words of the Master, that it was better for the Comforter to come than for himself to stay, and that the Comforter could not come until Christ had gone (John 16 : 7). These comparisons lay open all that is essentially unlike in the earlier and later work of the Spirit, as one era passed into the other.

The explanation frequently offered for the expediency of the Master's going is that his bodily presence would have localized and narrowed Christianity as disastrously as the claims for Jerusalem and Gerizim narrowed by localizing two rival forms of the ancient religion; that it would have proved an intolerable inconvenience to all who love the Lord and a serious bar to the development and spread of the new religion; indeed, that so long as

we are in the flesh the visible presence of Jesus on earth would tend to set up idolatry of his body and to carnalize the faith itself ; that, in spite of all, it would make the kingdom of Christ a kingdom of this world, the weapons of our warfare carnal, and set the church wrestling against flesh and blood. There is no need to dispute the accuracy of this picture, but the evils which make it look so dark show why it is expedient for us that Christ has gone away, not why it was well for the loved Eleven that he should go. To find out what benefits he had in view for them we need not draw on our imaginations nor look so far away as this explanation asks us to.

The advantages which the Lord promised are presumably those which his followers afterward experienced, and, to learn what advantages they reaped, we have only fifty days to wait. The apostles were to be witnesses to our Lord's resurrection, but the ascension must complete the resurrection. To him earth would have remained a prison house. And how could the disciples give convincing testimony that he had risen? If Jesus were still on earth every hearer would insist on seeing the Lord for himself. It would be equally disastrous for him to offer himself as a spectacle to the world or refuse to show himself. Every step taken to make sure would be a profanation. It was enough that he said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger." To Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians he must say, as he did to Mary, "Touch me not."

How completely reversed the situation when the disciples saw him ascend to where he was before, and when the Holy Spirit, according to the promise which

Jesus had received from the Father, came to testify that God had made the Crucified both Lord and Christ. His witnesses might now declare him to be "the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Now they could testify, otherwise they could not. They entered, therefore, upon the most glorious mission ever confided to men. This was the first fruit of the Lord's going and the Spirit's coming, namely, they could testify to the fact of his divinity and resurrection.

That Jesus had risen and was divine did not include all the Good News. It was the fundamental matter of fact, the historic basis on which Christianity rests.

The second benefit from the Saviour's going and the Spirit's coming was that the apostles now began to apprehend and appreciate what the mission was on which Christ came. It was an advantage which the Lord himself had pointed out. Three of the four announcements of the Paraclete which the Master's last discourse contains make him a teacher. "The Comforter," said Jesus, "shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14 : 26); "He shall testify of me" (15 : 26); "He will guide you into all the truth. . . . He shall receive of mine and show it unto you" (16 : 13, 14). The Lord had foretold his crucifixion (Matt. 16 : 21-23) and in different forms declared the purpose of it (Matt. 20 : 28 ; 26 : 28 ; John 6 : 51), but only to fill his disciples with amazement (Mark 10 : 32) and sorrow (John 16 : 6), to provoke their protest (Matt. 16 : 22), and, by confusing their minds, so to weaken their courage as that, when he was arrested,

they fled in dismay (Mark 14 : 50). Even after he rose they still assumed that his mission was to "restore again the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1 : 6). How much time it took them after the Spirit came to comprehend the astounding fact that Christ was their redemption and their life or in what way they arrived at this knowledge we are not told. There is no hint of an additional revelation on this point except to Paul, and we are left to take for granted that knowledge of what constitutes the Good News came to them through insight which the Holy Spirit afforded when he recalled and they meditated on the teachings of the Lord and all that had befallen him.

This second advantage of the Holy Spirit's coming was the possession of the message which they were to carry ; and it illustrates how far beyond computation is the importance of the Spirit's all-inclusive office to minister the truth.

A third, and to the disciples personally a crowning expediency in the Master's going and the Spirit's coming, was the transformation of their characters. Possibly it would be better to call it their development on a scale so large as to look like a transformation. This has become a commonplace in discourses about the apostles. It is set forth with freshness and beauty in the first sermon of Hare's "Mission of the Comforter." The archdeacon likens it to the benefit that a boy obtains "when he passes from under his father's roof to school" —not to what we call a "day school," but to what the English know as a "public school," like Eton or Rugby, where a lad takes his place in the crowd at what seems to Americans a tender age. Here he is "trained be-



times for the habits and duties, the energy and endurance of active life, and . . . may learn to look upon himself, not merely as a member of a family, but as bound by manifold ties to his fellow-men; so that the idea of a State, and of himself as a member of the State, may gradually rise up within him." Such words, addressed as these were to university men, then under the training so nobly advocated, might well impart an idea of the apostles' gain in manliness and sense of responsibility, in capacity for initiative and persistence of effort. All of which was seen at its best in Paul, who knew only the instructions of the Holy Ghost, and who enjoyed in full the blessedness of those "who have not seen, and yet have believed." Hare does not too strongly insist on the advantage to character; but hardly satisfies us that it was the advantage which the Master had in mind when he said it was expedient for him to go away. The gain of character was a real but a subsidiary, a third result; while the first and second places must be accorded to the new revelations which Jesus promised concerning himself and his mission (John 13 : 19; 17 : 5; 16 : 25).

#### 5. The Transition—Christ Must Go

We turn to the companion statement, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16 : 7). Could not heaven spare them both at once? Would the universe itself come to a stand, if the Son and the Spirit, who are the agents of God in cosmic affairs, were at the same time taken up with human affairs? Would it even embarrass the triune Godhead, if the Second and the Third Persons were sent together on



missions that subordinated them both, and so far seemed to dissociate them from the Deity? The boldest speculations have been indulged, and are almost invited by this occult saying of our Lord. Without pretending to sound its depths, we may notice facts which would justify it, but which one hardly dares to say are its interior meaning, or perhaps even thought of by our Lord. What he meant he did not tell us, and we will not venture to guess.

Yet so simple a thing may be said as this: the Comforter is a substitute, and substitution for any one requires the displacement of that one. The Father would send the Comforter in the name of Christ and to recall all that Christ had said (John 14 : 26). Whatever gain there might be in having the Master's words brought to remembrance, and by his authority, that is, in his name, all this advantage of meditative mood and pensive, loving insight comes after the adored Teacher's work is finished, and he has disappeared.

A second consideration is, I think, admissible. Jesus at first promised that he would pray the Father to send the Comforter (John 14 : 16), but afterward said he would himself send the Comforter from the Father (John 15 : 26). So closely associated are the offices of the divine Persons that Jesus could both say: "If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it" (John 14 : 14); and "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16 : 23). When Jesus answered prayer, the Father was not excluded from answering it; and so the Comforter, whom the Father would send, Jesus also would be sending. But all this was to follow the ascension. While the Son of God remained on

earth, he remained a servant. It could hardly belong to him during his humiliation to dispatch the Spirit of God on errands. Without measure the Spirit was bestowed on him, and gave him power ; it was not yet for him to empower the Spirit.

Finally, some insight into this mysterious utterance is possibly afforded by the great fact which, we may hope, will clear up for us many perplexities concerning the Holy Spirit ; namely, that his general office is to minister the truth. "The truth" into which the "Spirit of truth" would guide the disciples (John 16 : 13) was "the truth as it is in Jesus," the truth about his becoming a man, about his life with men, his crucifixion, his resurrection, and his glory, the truth, in one word, about his mission. But the fruits of his mission could not be imparted by the Holy Spirit until that mission had been accomplished. If any method had already been attempted and found unavailable, it was the assertion in advance by prophets and by the Master himself that redemption would be wrought through him. In vain he told his disciples that he must die, they would not hear to it ; or why he must die, they could see nothing but calamity in it. It was idle to say that he laid down his life in order that he might take it again ; the victory was hidden by the defeat. They simply could not be brought to face the need of his sacrifice, until it was too late to object any longer ; and even then, as we know from all the early addresses of Peter which are recorded in the Acts, they saw in the crucifixion only a crime. At length they saw that the death of our Lord was a sacrifice, although a sacrifice offered by wicked hands, and as an act of uttermost disobedience. They

saw this at last, and were prepared to see it. Before he died they thought too much of him to believe that he must be crucified for their salvation ; but after he had submitted to death, and shown that the grave could not hold him, then they thought so much more of him, that in the end his cross could be regarded as nothing less than a sufficient propitiation for the whole world. The Holy Spirit found them ready at length for his instructions.

Both of these deep and dark sayings, namely, it was expedient for the disciples that the Lord should go away, and until he went the Comforter could not come, occur in one sentence and have one explanation, namely, to be taught the Good News in full by the indwelling Spirit is better than to enjoy the bodily presence of Jesus. What the Spirit was able to do for men before and after the Lord's ascension would be determined by what the Spirit was able to teach. Let it be said again : The ministry of the truth turns on the truth to be ministered.

### 6. The New Era

It is easy now to characterize in few words the era of the Holy Spirit. All that has been said either concerning the Spirit's general office or concerning the era before Pentecost, distinguishes by implication the new era. In every age it is the Spirit's office to minister the truth. Under the old dispensation that ministry was hampered by the embodiment of the truth in symbols, but helped by the liberation of the truth in prophecy and song. The gospel dispensation completes this process. If any part of Christian truth is set forth by our two Christian ordinances, and all the Christian realities

are thus set forth, the truth is not restricted to this expression. It is published at large in the gospel of God's grace. We are indeed warned of a bad possibility when we find the ordinances perverted into mysteries, and such effects ascribed to them by the superstition of Christians as were ascribed to Levitical and Pharasaic observances by the fanaticism of Jews. In this case the rivalry of priests and prophets begins again. Once more the priest, encumbering and disguising the truth in forms, lays a little restraint on the operations of the Holy Spirit; and then once more the prophet, inspired of the Holy Ghost, denounces the subjection of the gospel to ordinances, sets the doctrine free and provides for the Spirit a renewal of his own dispensation.

The abolishment of the ancient ceremonial was necessarily the abolishment of all distinctions which turned on that ceremonial. The Jew could no longer have any advantage; which is in fact to say that he was no longer at a disadvantage. But Christianity did more than abolish the ancient formulas; it fulfilled them. All the truth in them thus became an inheritance in common. This universality of our faith is its fundamental distinction. It is the most conspicuous provision which has been made for the Spirit's activity. And on all who will accept the truth, that is, who will open their hearts to the dealings of the Holy Spirit, he confers every privilege which Israel could claim. They are God's peculiar people. They are in the kingdom of heaven. They are the chosen, the called out, the ecclesia, the church. As such the Spirit makes his home in them. The peculiar people of God are the peculiar abode of his Spirit.

If it were asked what is the salient characteristic of Christianity, an adequate answer would be, the offices of Jesus Christ administered by the Holy Spirit. It remains for us to consider in the following chapters some ministrations of the Holy Spirit in his own especial era.

## CHAPTER VII

### CHRIST BEGOTTEN

#### 1. The Evidence

MATTHEW'S account of our Lord's generation is curiously matter of fact. "The genesis of Jesus Christ was thus": Before Joseph had wedded Mary, his betrothed, "she was found with child by the Holy Spirit" (1 : 18). Joseph decided to put her away quietly, but was dissuaded by a dream that the angel of the Lord appeared to him, saluted him as "son of David," and bade him not to shrink from taking Mary to wife, "because that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." She will bear a son and Joseph shall give him a name, the name of names, the name of Jesus, which means Saviour (ver. 19-21). The person shall have a title suited to his office.

Luke's much more detailed history begins at an earlier point. Mary is assured of her son's divine paternity by an explanation of utmost directness and solemnity. The Spirit's part is defined and the mother also hears a name for her child—but that name is *Son of God* (1 : 35).

Some deny that any writer of the New Testament, besides Matthew and Luke, knows of the virgin birth. John's order of ideas is certainly peculiar as well as striking. The eternal and the temporal are uniquely intermingled. There is no strict regard for historical succession in the first thirteen verses of this evangel's proem. The eternal Word was Creator ; was the Life

and the Light, but uncomprehended by the darkness ; received testimony from the man John, whom God sent ; was the genuine Light, enlightening every man ; was in the world but unknown to the world ; came to his own, was not received by his own, yet to some who did receive him he gave the right to become God's children—children not begotten of blood, that is, from the life of the man-animal ; nor of the will of the flesh, that is, not by the impulse to propagate ; nor of the will of man, that is, not by human choice in any way, but of God. And with this John at length plainly announces that the Word was himself made flesh, became a man, soul and body ; as such dwelt among us, and yet men could see in him his proper glory, the glory of the Father's only begotten (1 : 1-14). Evidently the cosmic and preincarnate relations of the eternal Word so entrance the evangelist that his thought cannot move unarrested down to the historic plane of the incarnation. With every lower step he turns to look back. When at last his rhapsody touches this level of ours it is but to survey the vast interval between what the Word was and what he became. Even then he sees the Word made flesh only after he has set forth the doctrine of the new sonship of believers. It is altogether a very curious, as well as grand and jubilant overture to the gospel story.

Now in giving the source of our new sonship John passes at once from saying that it is "not by will of the flesh" to stating that "the Word was made flesh." While repudiating the idea that our new begetting is by the flesh does John have in mind all the while, and make haste to say as the very next thing that the eternal Word became a man through just such a carnal beget-



ting? Can he mean that we are begotten of God, while "the only begotten of the Father" was begotten by a man? To whom would Mary be so certain to tell the mystery of Jesus' birth as to the disciple loved of Jesus, of whom he said, "Woman, behold thy son"? If the story of the virgin birth is not a fable John knew of it, and if John wrote the Fourth Gospel its proem can have no rational meaning, except that for us there is a spiritual new begetting and for Jesus a spiritual first begetting. Whoever wrote this evangel it is admittedly the latest, perhaps much the latest. Its author could hardly have failed to hear of the virgin birth, and if he meant to repudiate it left his own narrative in awkward relation to his doctrine. He knows Mary was the mother of Jesus (2 : 1), that Jesus was the only begotten of the Father, and calls him so in the verse which tells us that the Word was made flesh (1 : 14). Who would here think of two fathers?

John here says nothing about the Holy Spirit, and it would be illegitimate to import any reference to the Third Person of the Trinity; but if by Spirit of God we mean the energy by which God operates we may properly regard John as holding that the Spirit makes men the sons of God and made the Son of God a man.

Again, Paul's word to the Galatians (4 : 4), "God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law," is thought by many present day expositors not to imply the virgin birth. The phrase "born of a woman" is taken as a familiar equivalent to the word *man*. This equivalence is hardly so familiar as the appeal to such a custom would imply. It occurs in Job three times and in our Lord's reference to John the

Baptist once, as given by Matthew (11 : 11) and Luke (7 : 28) : "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet," etc. Without denying the alleged current use I find the significant thing in the passage to be the immediate conjunction of the two clauses, "God sent forth his Son" and "born of a woman." God is father, Mary the mother. To intrude between these clauses the idea of a second father is harsh and even offensive. If we can believe that Paul's attendant Luke knew the story of the annunciation and Paul did not, that all the facts were currently told among the apostles, with whom Paul conferred in Jerusalem, but that this fact was never mentioned to Paul, then the violent idea of a human paternity for Jesus may be read into this passage ; but unless such a state of the case is first made out it is natural that he whom we call "the apostle," and who copiously teaches the pre-existence of Christ, should be understood to have in mind here *how* God sent his Son into the world and with what historic fitness he was called "the Son of God."

Of course, as in John's case, it must be admitted that the passage does not mention the Holy Spirit, but if it at all implies a divine paternity for Jesus it as much implies that he was begotten by "the power of the Highest," by the Holy Spirit in the sense of the angel of the annunciation.

If we were to claim that John and Paul in the passages before us meant to teach the virgin birth, a preponderance of exegetical authority would be against us ; but if we claim only that these passages more naturally take for granted than exclude the virgin birth, a pre-

ponderance of psychological considerations favors such a claim. There are even certain considerations approaching a scientific character which hold against the view that Christ was the Son of God, yet also son of Joseph. To note first the psychological objection, in part already intimated.

If John and Paul believed that when the Son of God became a man he was Son both of God and of Joseph, why does neither apostle intimate so strange an opinion? But if on the contrary these apostles believed that the Spirit of God begat Christ, this fact might be taken for granted when they spoke of him as Son of God, which they often did. It is, however, alleged that they would have referred to the virgin birth had they known of it. The reverse, it still seems to me, would be true. We who believe in the virgin birth find but rare occasion to speak of it; they happened to find none. Is it not enough that both John and Paul constantly speak of God as the father of Christ? Were they never thinking of God as actually his father, but all the while thinking of Joseph as his real father? Surely, to speak of Christ as divine would naturally mean that he was born divine. Could they hold him to be human because born human and divine without being born divine, yet give no sign of ever considering how this came to be? We know of no Ritschl in those days to teach the apostles that such questions had better not be asked.

How little should be argued from the silence of Paul about the miraculous beginning of which the Gospels speak, may be gathered from the silence of the Gospels about the miraculous ending of which Paul speaks. He alone states that upwards of five hundred saw the risen

Lord at once. But Luke was Paul's companion. Luke says he got together his facts by careful inquiry right and left. He must have known what Paul told to the Corinthians, but he says not a word about the five hundred. Nor does John, nor Mark, nor Matthew, unless a veiled reference may be found in the Lord's appointment of a rendezvous in Galilee (26 : 32 ; 28 : 7, 16, 17).

But a difficulty arises from what we know of the origin and constitution of a human soul. A person complete owes his existence to a father and a mother. He cannot have more than two parents. Yet it is held that in some way Christ could be divine while Joseph was his father. The common conviction among Christians as to what Christ was is not given up, but its familiar basis is unconditionally surrendered. It is a view creditable to the faith of those who hold it. The question is not to be evaded, how Jesus, born of earthy parents, could become the eternal Word. By generation he was man ; how was he also God ? For he always said "I." The divine and the human in him spoke and existed as one. The Nestorian theory that there was a divine person in him besides a human person is not to be thought of ; nor that by moral conformity the human in him received the divine. Such a reception is possible to us also, but does not blend our soul and God into one person. It is enough, and it is fair to say that for the man Jesus, ordinarily begotten and born, to be one with the pre-existent, personal Word, yet without any parental connection with Godhead, is the most violently incredible, because most deliberately unaccountable miracle ever offered to faith. How could it serve as the pragmatic basis of all Christian faith ?

It may be added that at no early period in the discipleship of the apostles could Mary discreetly tell the story of the annunciation, and at no early period in the adhesion of either Jews or Gentiles could the apostles spread the story. Indeed, at no period would frequent occasion arise for referring to the virgin birth. Only in degenerate ages have the preachers of our faith been given to wonder-mongering. The virgin birth accounts for Christ, but not for believing in Christ. What is often said in effect of all miracles is true at least of this miracle: The miracle does not prove Christianity; Christianity approves the miracle.

## **2. The Objections**

As to the Holy Spirit's part in begetting our Lord the present state of opinion is novel and critical. It is part of a general situation, to which we must give a little notice in order to estimate worthily the evangelical narrative and its fruits.

### **(1) Anti-mystical—Ritschl**

A disposition exists to lighten the burdens of faith by cancelling every mystery from dogma, in particular from dogma about Christ. It is not so much intended to prove that his father was human, as to make little of all question about his father. The fullest exemplar of this disposition is its chief promoter and guide, Dr. Albrecht Ritschl, to whom it was a release from intolerable doubts. Ritschl's name is attached to many teachings, but to no other so important as his insistence that all theoretical inquiries about religion shall be dismissed. It was his good fortune to find a widespread

eagerness for just such mental relief, and he had the sagacity to meet this eagerness with an eminently practical and modern provision. It was his timely way of showing that we can be Christians without being theologians. For example, Christ he says answers every necessary purpose to us of eternal and only Son of God when he persuades us of God's love, and thus gives us power to triumph over earthly ills. If we could know that Christ was begotten of God this knowledge would not enhance his value to us either morally or religiously. Such knowledge, to be sure, would be curious and scientifically important, except for the fact that it could never be demonstrated to science. Nor can it for us.

This and many kindred questions, we must admit, have been matter of endless dispute, ground of serious reproach, and occasion of contemptuous infidelity, yet all were questions which, according to Ritschl, it was never possible nor ever important to answer. After Kant, Ritschl holds that in the presence of these problems pure reason is impotent. In fact, pure reason cannot know the ultimate reality of anything. But practical reason is competent. It can know all that is well worth knowing. Ritschl here seems to convert Lotze's philosophical idea that the knowability of a thing constitutes its worth to us into a converse theological idea, that the worth to us of a truth makes it knowable. Thus we may know God in knowing Christ, because in Christ we attain the use and enjoyment of all that God has of moral and religious value for us. Any conservative might say it, but Ritschl follows his fashion of "holding fast the form of sound words," while he



empties out their current meaning and pours in another. To Ritschl it is enough that Christ furnishes the idea of God as love ; to the church Christ presents what the love of God has done and does. According to Ritschl, then, we may well dispense with scientific certainties in the realm of spiritual things, and on the other hand we ought to repel all mystical bewilderment about them.

No doubt Ritschl brings great relief to many minds in distinguishing moral and religious from intellectual interests. It is possible for his followers to admit all the rationalistic objections to miracles, and all the critical objections to the Bible, even to give over the ancient faith on these matters to the enemy to be worried and torn and killed, while the disciple of the new school rests serene on the few doctrines which his "judgment of worth" indorses, and which are quite clear of all philosophical or scientific risks. The Ritschlian may be able thus to lock up in limbo the historic problems, and even the historic settlement of problems ; but the mass of thinking Christians have never shown either willingness or ability to take summary leave of their problems. Most earnest minds look with inappeasable longing toward a conclusive answer to such questions as whether God made the worlds, whether Christ is his Son, whether Christ was a veritable sacrifice for sin, whether he rose from the dead, whether the Holy Spirit transforms and dwells in believers, whether any of these alleged transcendent realities have been attested by supernatural signs ; or whether as to these matters all question is vain. Average Christians of intelligence feel that they must know whether they know, and what they can know. The in-



tellektual aspect of Christianity cannot be obliterated. Doctrine must seem fundamental to availability. A judgment as to the worth of Christianity involves a judgment as to its truth. The practical rests on the theoretical so far as this; to wit, the theoretical expounds the practical. If we are assured that no answer is possible to the questions which Ritschlianism puts out of court, most of us will be unable to rest contented with such verdicts and decisions as Ritschlianism affords. Or, if these are accepted, it will be as but small and pitiful fragments of the shattered rock on which the church was built.

We may go further and predict that, if the venerable doctrines of the faith, especially about Christ, are slain, the questions which they answered will revive and persist until new doctrines are framed which satisfy both the intellectual and the spiritual wants of men. A new Christianity cannot take the place of the old Christianity unless the new is found to be more adequate than the old, and therefore essentially truer. The church has framed its own judgment of worth; so has the common mind. This has always prevailed and will still prevail. If it had been unfavorable to Christian beliefs, they could never have found acceptance; and so long as it holds to them they will not be relinquished. To the historic value-judgment of the church that proposed by Ritschl cannot but appear unsubstantial and even delusive. To say that the revelation of God's love in Christ makes him answer the purpose to us of the Son of God, and excludes all propriety in asking whether he was veritably such or not, must seem in effect like saying, "Let us make believe that Jesus was the Son

of God. It will be all the same to us as though it were true." But a gospel of make-believe is unsatisfactory to all Christians except the followers of Mrs. Eddy, and the very different disciples of the learned Ritschl. It would seem that it cannot long satisfy Christians of any sort. The historic value-judgment is an estimate of the worth of *facts*. It never rested on a confessed unreality or uncertainty. And it could be contented only with wide conquests. It covers now a large territory. It must itself be overthrown before it will surrender these possessions. It must meet with its Sedan before it will give up its Alsace and Lorraine.

## (2) Mystical—Walker

Besides the Ritschlian refusal to consider any possible mystery in the nature of Christ, and the semi-Ritschlian acceptance of his deity without admitting that God begat him, there is a thorough-going reference of the whole case to the activity of the Holy Spirit. The recent work of W. L. Walker, "The Spirit and the Incarnation," is the most engaging attempt of late to explain Christology philosophically yet evangelically. The book's especial charm is its completeness, coherence, and unobtrusive piety. Its path is parallel to Martineau's "Way Out of the Trinitarian Controversy," although that "Way Out" left Martineau with his Unitarians, and Walker came back to the evangelicals. According to this theory the Father is God as source of all being; the Son is God as going forth to creatures; the Spirit is the innermost essence of God and Christ. The author rejects distinct personalities in the three. This is essentially modalistic, although Mr.

Walker does not hold to Sabellianism, in the sense that the personal modes of divine existence were successive.

In the alleged relations of God to the world modalism passes into monism. The Spirit, which is the life not only of God but of all things, in accepting the limitations of that in which it resides, shapes them at first as the unconscious idea and potency of the universe. Consciousness is reached when the evolution produces animal life; rationality when it reaches man, and God's self-realization when Christ is born. And so Christ is "the result of the whole working of the Word or Spirit in nature and in man." A "literal interpretation of the narratives [of the nativity] cannot compel belief" (p. 323). Without irruption of miracle God steadily animates nature until its processes reach their goal in revealing the Son of Man as Son of God. The Spirit, ever the life of God and of things, is uniquely the life of Jesus, in whom the process of evolution ends.

However compatible with New Testament texts this account of Christ may be, the New Testament would never have suggested it. The proem of John's evangel teaches the transcendence of God, the assumption by the Word of our humanity as a new vestment, as more than a new vestment, as a new nature, quite as distinctly as this appears in Matthew's or Luke's story of the nativity. Even Paul's identification of the pre-existent Son with the divine fullness, as shown by the Son's manifold cosmic relations, makes the Son not less distinct from the essence of things than when, in the same account the Son figures as making peace between God and creation (Col. 1 : 15-20). God is immanent in the universe, or, if one prefers, the universe is immanent in God, pre-

cisely because *he is not* the universe. It can be said to be supported by him, because it is NOT HE.

Unless we and these many generations have unaccountably misread the New Testament, Mr. Walker's modalism, that is, his denial of distinct personalities in the Godhead, finds even less support in the New Testament than does his monism, that is, his identification of all energy and plan, life and reason with the Spirit of God. Comprehensive and coherent, devout and almost dazzling as his theory is, it must look for support not to the Bible but to philosophy. Of this the author is very well aware. In effect he owns it when he makes his appeal to what Christians know by experience of the indwelling Spirit, rather than to what they read about it in the old Book which has served so long as norm of the Christian faith. But before philosophy can identify the Spirit of God with the energy in things, indeed before we need consider any philosophical objections to such an identification, science must be satisfied of what thus far she persistently denies; namely, that physical energy and so-called mental energy can be converted into each other. The physical energy of a blow awakens the "mental energy" of resentment, and maybe a determination to fight. But the energy of the blow is not converted into the energy of the resentment, nor is the "energy" bent on fighting converted into the bodily force of the blow in return. Force cannot be absorbed into mind, nor mind flow forth in force. God may create force, but it is not an efflux from him. His Spirit is not physical energy. This stumbling-block lies at the threshold of all monistic schemes. No effectual removal of it has

yet been undertaken, nor can be dispensed with by denying that the stumbling-block is there.

But the essential mysticism of Mr. Walker's theory puts it quite apart from anti-mystical Ritschlian and semi-Ritschlian theories. It is not hostile to evangelical trust. The typical Ritschlian and semi-Ritschlian views are mild-mannered but formidable enemies of the common faith. They have started the whisper that it is wiser not to insist on the tradition about Jesus having no earthly father. Yet when this attitude is quietly taken, on any ground, it bears itself so unlike the arrogant, aggressive, heavy-armed hostility of the old unitarianism, it seems so sympathetic, soft-spoken, smiling, it makes so loving use of the familiar terms "Son of God," "reconciliation," and the like, that one forgets to ask whether there are any risks in this suave neology. One finds it rather a thing to muse over, speculating whether, since it came gently as a mist, it will not presently lift like a mist, without giving a chill to faith. Or lightly asks, which smacks the more piquant, that we need not ask what Christ was, or that we need not ask how he came to be what he was? The drift of doctrine might almost be looked upon as a spectacle for dilettante unconcern, and not at all as an issue of life and death.

A situation like this, both for seriousness and for triviality, throws into strong relief the massive basement built for faith when the Holy Spirit begat Christ.

### 3. The Consequences

Many writers on the Holy Spirit seem to have taken advantage of the theme to expand from this point of

view entire systems of theology. Experience in writing one more book on this subject teaches the author charity. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is so intertwined with other Christian doctrines that it cannot be disentangled ; nor can its real significance be exhibited except by tracing these relations. This is particularly true as to the relations of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ. How can we know what Jesus was apart from the Spirit ? How can we know what the Spirit was to him, except by a study of our Lord in different situations ?

### (1) Divinity of Christ

The generation of our Lord by the Spirit of God wherever it has become known, has secured an unhesitating and joyous acceptance of the divinity of Christ. Such an interposition of God drew after it the visit of the heavenly host, of the watchful star, of the wise men from the wondering East, of the gentle shepherds familiar with the night, of the bloody messengers from frightened Herod, started the *nunc dimittis* of devout Simeon, and has lifted the advent song in all ages, because that Holy Thing which was born of Mary could be no other than the Son of God. The Holy Spirit at the outset made sure of all that Christ was to be for men. Nothing else would have made it sure ; but begetting by the Holy Ghost could leave nothing uncertain. Faith in the proper divinity of Christ is the vital principle of Christianity. When it perishes Christianity dies. Such faith must have an appreciable basis in fact. That basis is the begetting by the Holy Ghost. To ask that this basis be given up is to ask that faith outdo in rashness the temptation on the temple's pinnacle : Jesus was in-



vited to cast himself upon the care of angels ; faith is invited to cast herself upon the empty air.

Let it be remembered that some who hold to the divinity of our Lord will not accept any confirmation of their faith from the testimony of Matthew and Luke to the begetting of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. It is an illustration of the extreme to which a new method of inquiry at first carries those who adopt it. In the present case the method is that of historical reconstruction. The books of the New Testament are scrutinized for intimations of their origin and relations, and then a biblical theology framed in harmony with the rebuilt history of the books. A critic may admit that Paul holds firmly to the divinity of Christ, but does so on the ground of his resurrection and of the life which is imparted to us by the Spirit of Christ. So large place in Paul's Christology was assigned to what our Lord now is and does, so small place to his career on earth, that speculative minds following Paul soon caught at the fancy that Christ was divine only and his humanity merely an appearance. This in turn gave occasion for John's doctrine of the Word and of the Word incarnated. Therefore, in John's Gospel the Word reveals his divine glory through the flesh, while in Paul's doctrine that glory is revealed through us, and in John's first Epistle denial that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" is denounced as anti-Christian (4 : 3). With such an origin in spiritual experience or Christological speculation for belief in the divinity of Christ, no account is made of the record of the virgin birth in Matthew and Luke. The historical source of the doctrine having been conjecturally made out, exegesis must



be absolutely conformable. And so Luke is said not to draw the doctrine of Christ's divinity from his own elaborate account of the generation of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. How little he regards this tale may be known from the fact that he speaks of Joseph as the father, Joseph and Mary as the parents of Jesus.

Now this is truly a remarkable attempt by the critical processes of the present day to empty a Gospel of the meaning always heretofore found in it. The history proposed for the views of Paul and John may be regarded as highly probable without rendering the familiar interpretation of Matthew and Luke improbable. Does Luke call Joseph the father of Jesus, Joseph and Mary his parents? He calls them so but does not so regard them. The only instance of terming Joseph father is Mary's expostulation to her boy: "Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." How else could she have spoken of Joseph? Would not the title father be given even to an ordinary step-father? Must we not believe that it was naturally and always used of Joseph? And did not Jesus at once give his mother something to "keep in her heart" by laying claim to another father? "Did ye not know I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2 : 48, 49.) How can we think so meanly of Luke's intelligence as to suppose that he could record a story of the annunciation, which renounced for Jesus an earthly father, and still go on fancying that Jesus had such a father? The same considerations apply to the two instances, the circumcision of Jesus and his first Passover (Luke 2 : 27, 41), in which his putative parents were termed parents. In the next chapter an express disclaimer is introduced by Luke as

to the relation of Jesus to Joseph: "Being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph" (3 : 23).

## (2) Pre-existence of Christ

How does the generation of the Son of God by the Holy Spirit bear on belief in his pre-existence? Candor compels the reply that if we were to insist in the usual way on the begetting of Jesus by the Third Person of the Trinity, not only would such a question be unanswerable for a trinitarian, but so objectionable that it ought never to be asked. Can it be credited that the Eternal Word, by whom all things were created, was incapable of providing himself a human body? Dare we think that he who is the life of all men coming into the world, when he himself came could not be the life of Jesus? Is there any reason of any kind for holding that not himself, nor the Father whose agent he was in all things, nor the power of the Highest by which the Word did all things, but the Third Person in the Trinity, to which he was never subordinated, must make the Word flesh?

So dark and repellent a supposition as the generation of Jesus by the Holy Spirit in an ultra-dogmatic, trinitarian sense, is swept aside by the loyally exegetical thought of the generative Spirit as "the power of the Highest." Certainly it was by God's power that Jesus was begotten. We could not tell, and we need not ask whether the Word himself put forth that energy by entering into personal union with the human. It would, however, look more suitable to the idea of fatherhood in God to regard God himself as exercising that power when the pre-existent Word, through whom his power

is ever exercised, was by the Spirit, which is God's power, made flesh.

### (3) Dipersonality

The refusal to carry back to the incarnation the later revelation that the Holy Spirit is a Third Person in a Trinity safeguards the notion that the divine in Christ was at least a Second Person in the Godhead. The Spirit has lately been spoken of in Mr. Walker's striking book (p. 188) already commented on (p. 86 f.), as "the principle of Christ's life from the first." But that which begat the life-principle in Christ is not itself his life-principle. A father's soul is not his son's soul; the Second Person is not the First incarnated.

Indeed, the Spirit of God in begetting Jesus so far brought to light for the first time personal distinctions in the Deity. It is because the first and second of these quasi persons correspond so well to the incarnation that the incarnation could offer them to our knowledge. The incarnation certainly reveals historical fatherhood and sonship; does it also reveal eternal sonship and fatherhood? The First Person in the Trinity is not certainly father from eternity of the Second Person; nor certainly not so. It is plain that there are two Eternal Persons; what is not plain is that the idea of paternity which best describes the immaculate conception is also an adequate ontology of the relation between these Persons from eternity. But the incarnation reveals duality at most. It prepares us to learn that the Holy Spirit also is a distinct person, but for a plain assurance of his personality we must await the revelation by Jesus himself concerning the Comforter.

#### (4) Sinlessness and Susceptibility

The sinlessness of Jesus may be studied in the light of his generation by the Holy Spirit. That God was his father and Mary his mother contains implications which could be known only if we know what the divine and the human singly imply, and what their relations are in Christ. But we know enough to see that his origin explains the facts of his life; he was free from sin, but susceptible to temptation.

That he was entirely unaffected by the native depravity of his mother could not be taken for granted by any one who believes depravity to be inherited. Does the New Testament teach that Jesus in no degree shared his mother's moral state? Theologians have often insisted that he had the human nature of the unfallen Adam. But where did he get it? Paul does not say he had it. Paul says, on the contrary, that God sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8 : 3). Would Paul, would even a theologian, say that Adam was created in the likeness of sinful flesh? That is, what Adam was by creation, and what Jesus was by birth are not to be stated in the same way. "Sinful flesh" means to Paul the seat and the symbol of sinfulness. It could not be attributed to Jesus, because he was not sinful; and that he was not sinful Paul plainly enough means in saying that God sent his Son, not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of it. Jesus inherited from his mother the reality of flesh, and the likeness of sinfulness. What saved him from the reality of sinfulness? His generation by the Holy Spirit. What was it in him that was like sinfulness, but was not sinfulness? What could he accept without moral

stain? What could the Holy Spirit suffer him to accept as an inheritance from depravity? His liability to temptation seems to have been such an heritage. The susceptibility to temptation, which the Holy Spirit left him to inherit, the Spirit also led him to realize, as we must presently consider.

The one book in the New Testament which sets out elaborately to exalt Jesus Christ above all creatures is the Epistle to the Hebrews. But this Epistle ascribes his competence as High Priest to the fact that he "hath suffered being tempted" (2 : 18), and proves his priestly sympathy with our infirmities by the fact that he "was tempted in all points like as we are" (4 : 15). That is to say, this official fitness of the Christ was provided for by a personal fitness in Jesus; and it was as much the function of the Holy Spirit in begetting him to leave him subject to temptation as to secure him from depravity; to stamp on him as notable a likeness to sinful flesh as there was reality of sinlessness. But that Jesus was to be saved from all taint of depravity was declared in so many words when Mary was told that the Holy Spirit would beget by her a "holy being" (Luke 1 : 35). A fuller consideration of this topic belongs to the second part of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CHRIST INSTALLED

**J**ESUS is about to enter on his mission as the Christ. He enters through the solemn door of baptism into the mystery of the forty days, and passes out of this gloomy vestibule into the open court of his official life, beyond which is the adytum, the Holiest Place, with veil as yet unrent. The baptism was the formal, the temptation was the moral, installation of the Christ. Each invites study from the point of view afforded by our theme.

#### 1. The Baptism

The baptism of our Lord has both personal and official importance. The latter is much the more varied and difficult to comprehend. We study first the baptism

##### (1) Of Jesus, the Person

It was the Spirit's descent which places the baptism of the person Jesus within the purview of this inquiry. There are curious diversities in the Gospel stories<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> According to Matthew (3 : 16) and Mark (1 : 10) the descent was seen by Jesus—by whom seen Luke does not state—and by the baptizer, according to John (1 : 32). According to Matthew, Mark, and John, the Spirit descended as a dove descends to rest; but the specific and careful Luke has it that the Spirit came down "in bodily form like a dove" (3 : 22). It is Luke who also mentions that Jesus was praying when the Spirit came. The Father's acknowledgment was addressed to Jesus, according to Mark and Luke; to any that heard it, according to Matthew; while the fourth Gospel substitutes for a divine acknowl-



which, without implying contradiction, raise the question, who saw the Spirit descend, and who heard the voice from heaven? All agree that the descent and the voice were God's response to the obedience of his Son. We find here at the beginning what Paul saw at the end. Because Jesus humbled himself and became obedient, even accepting the humiliation of a baptism, God highly exalted him, and called him at once by the name which is above every name (Phil. 2 : 8, 9). We need not curiously inquire in this connection how to accept baptism was for both Jesus and John "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3 : 15); but we can feel what we might not be able to show, that the baptism was for Jesus, personally considered, an act of submission and of piety.

We too could be audaciously meek as John. We too could forbid Jesus, and say, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But in both points we would be wrong, as John was. There was no need of being baptized by Jesus. He baptized no one. He did more for us, but not that. Whatever benefit baptism can convey, the benefit was not to be enhanced by such a pre-eminence in the administrator. Paul would not risk baptizing with his own hands. Any one who boasted of baptism by Paul would thereby and so far have made Paul, in spite of himself, baptize in his own name. Maybe to this day the good that there is in a baptism does not turn on who performs it, but on this, that it is a filling up of all righteousness. It certainly had for Jesus, and may have for us, that becoming quality.

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edgment the proclamation by John the Baptist that he had seen the Spirit descend and remain, and so knew the Son of God (1 : 33, 34).



Furthermore, as it was becoming in Jesus to submit to baptism, it became him to receive it from the commissioned Baptist, the devout yet imperfect John. Another baptism awaited Jesus at the close of three swift and crowded years. That baptism too must be administered by hands that had sinned, by hands less worthy than those of John. To offer the ancient sacrifices was an act of loyalty; to offer the supreme sacrifice was the last outrage of disloyalty. But it would become Jesus to accept that final baptism, and it now became him to receive, and John to administer, this first baptism.

The Father's response was a recognition and an acceptance of the fulfilled righteousness. It was fitting to send the Spirit of peace by the emblem of peace. It was fitting that God should now acknowledge his Son. In these respects the baptism of Jesus was not singular. For thousands coming up out of the water the heavens have opened, the Spirit descended, the Father's voice been heard. To all of these thousands insight should be easy into the personal effects of baptism on Jesus. For them, if not for him, but possibly for him also, the gift of the Spirit summed up all. It is the Spirit's coming which for us divides the skies; it is the Spirit that makes us hear the Father's voice; it is the Spirit of God which becomes in us the spirit of adoption, and responds with "Abba, Father," when the Father says to us, as to Jesus, "My son."

The solemn elation of that hour was needed by our Lord. The voice and the Spirit did not make him God's Son, as the dull-souled Jewish Christianity of the first century soon began to say, and as some other

wrinkled and starved vagary of doctrine in every century since the first has ventured to respond. His baptism did not make Jesus the Son of God, probably did not reveal to himself the fact, but it made him feel sure that he was such. By what inward intimation he came to know that God was his Father, we are in no way informed. Whether he could afterward say, "Before Abraham was I am," because his recollections ran back through infancy to "the glory that he had with the Father before the world was," or whether from boyhood on he had instinctively felt his way to knowledge of his eternal pre-existence, or whether it was directly revealed to him when a man grown, as we suppose mysteries were sometimes revealed to prophets, we can only helplessly conjecture. However clear his inward persuasion may have been, an inward persuasion is one thing and an outward notification quite another thing. He was a man; how assuring, then, the formal proclamation that he was the beloved Son of God! What a personal equipment for his ministry! How great the need at every moment for all the spiritual power to be thence derived! So assured, his serenity becomes intelligible. We can see in part how shame could not humiliate, nor clamor confuse, nor pain enfeeble, nor dread of death check the course of the Son of Man, since he knew that he was also the Son of God. It was all-important to him that the Spirit which brought this assurance should remain; it is all-important to us that the same Spirit should remain and render the same service now as then. If the spirit of assurance had been displaced by the spirit of bondage to fear, the strong character of Jesus would have been wrecked. Such a substitu-

tion too often does that mischief now. But for him to fulfill all righteousness brought and kept the assurance of his Sonship; and it is for us the condition of the Comforter's abiding. Let us turn from the somewhat obvious lessons of baptism in the case of the person Jesus, to study in its official importance, the baptism

## (2) Of Christ, the Official

The baptism of the Christ and the descent on him of the Holy Spirit occurred together, and belonged together. The baptism of the person Jesus meant for him the "fulfillment of all righteousness" and was duly rewarded. We can see that it was so, perplexing as the question still may be how this duty came to be laid on Jesus. As to the official Christ, the descent of the Spirit after he was baptized requires us to look for an intelligible significance and an official propriety in the baptism itself.

The boldest statement about it was made by John the Baptist. He came baptizing others in order that the Christ might be "made manifest to Israel." John was to know him by the descent and abiding of the Spirit (John 1 : 31, 32). We may at least recognize that, whatever other services John's baptism rendered, this service was its crown.

In studying the baptism of the Christ we must frankly ask what John's baptism meant for others who sought it. What it meant for themselves all would understand it to mean for Christ. It was this natural way of looking at the matter which led John to decline baptizing Jesus. Can we suppose that such a meaning was overlooked by our Lord when he insisted on being baptized?

John's baptism had two faces. One turned toward the past, the other toward the future. As to the past it was a confession and a purification. Our Lord could not escape an application to him of this meaning, but he did not avoid its edge, he did not explain it away. Those who noticed the implication as John did, he left with it, as afterward he left the young ruler whom he would not allow to call him "good." "None is good but God." In so saying he ranked himself with us men, and in receiving the baptism of repentance his first official act was to take his place among men.

But it is easy to see that the backward look of John's baptism was only a minor matter, although indispensable; the main significance was for the future. The future alone gave this baptism real occasion for any one. What, then, of the future? The kingdom of heaven was at hand and a baptizing inducted every man into his place in that kingdom. For Christ this must be the chief importance of being baptized if the ceremony could afford its own meaning. It introduced him into the kingdom of heaven and into his own place there. But the place of Christ was at the head of the kingdom. Such a place could hardly be accorded without a rite of institution, nor by a rite less solemn, less profoundly significant than baptism. Especially suitable was it that the Father should there and then acknowledge his Son, and that together with this acknowledgment should be conferred on Christ the consecrating and enabling Spirit.

So far all is plain. A laving in water and an anointing with oil was the well-known rite of consecration. David would not permit his lawless followers to lay

hands on Saul, the Lord's anointed (1 Sam. 24 : 6). By this holy unction Solomon won his throne against the attractive and precipitate Adonijah (1 Kings 1 : 39-53). The chrism was not to be omitted for the disciples of Christ (2 Cor. 1 : 21 ; 1 John 2 : 20), still less for the Lord himself. It made him the Anointed, the Messiah, the Christ. His anointing and theirs was of the Holy Spirit. In no case, to be sure, was the Spirit given under the form of an unction, but it was thought of and spoken of as such. "He who hath anointed us," said Paul, "is God" (2 Cor. 1 : 21). "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," wrote John (1 John 2 : 20). Peter says "God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10 : 38); and the Lord himself announced to his wondering townsfolk in Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to publish good tidings to the poor" (Luke 4 : 18). It is no strain of the story's meaning to understand the baptism and the gift of the Spirit as our Lord's official commission and induction. It would be unnatural and a strain not so to understand. "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen," said Jehovah, "I will put my Spirit upon him" (Matt. 12 : 18).

All this is sufficiently clear for precisely that moment; but may we not also look back from the completed mission to its opening, and from such a point of view see the two phases of the baptism blend into one? The phase turned toward the past faces sins to be washed away. Accepting this phase Jesus took a place among his people. That looking toward the future sees for all the baptized a place in the coming kingdom. Accepting this phase Christ took his place at the head

of the kingdom. But Jesus becomes the Christ, he takes his place at the head of the kingdom by making common cause with his people. The sins which his baptism confessed we discover as we look back, were the sins of his people; the sin washed away was the sin of the world.

There are not wanting some who see in the baptism of Christ his conscious acceptance at the outset of the position which he openly took to himself in the end, the position foretold by Isaiah of the servant of Jehovah: "He was numbered with the transgressors." And so the "righteous servant" fulfilled all righteousness when in symbol he "justified many by bearing their iniquities" (Isa. 53 : 11, 12; Luke 22 : 37).<sup>1</sup> Or if we dare not say that the Lord's baptism was meant to have such a signification in advance, how deny it this significance in retrospect?

Whatever strength the baptism afforded as a definitive and official consecration, whatever comfort it brought through the acknowledgment of him by the Father, whatever inspiration and uplift through the descent of the Spirit, all were needed, and urgently needed, for "immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness" (Mark 1 : 12) "to be tempted of the devil" (Matt. 4 : 1).

## 2. The Temptation

The moral installation of our Lord was his temptation in the wilderness. But the experience of temptation was an equipment and an induction for the Christ by being a discipline for the person Jesus. Us he

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<sup>1</sup> See Denney's "The Death of Christ," Pp. 20, 21.



would have pray not to be led into temptation, but he himself accepted the test. And "in that he himself hath suffered being tempted" he would spare us the suffering, above all, the risk of temptation.<sup>1</sup>

#### (1) Whence the Temptation?

Jesus had now been acknowledged by the Father and endowed with the Holy Spirit. So recognized and invested he must prepare for what was before him. A wise and large-minded man will not enter on an important calling without full contemplation of its aims and forecast alike of its opportunities and its obstacles. The spirit of a normal young man rises to thoughts like these. They provide his ambitions. With such vigor as he can he will fix his purpose and concentrate his desires. Happy for him afterward if he is able to renew the vision when it fades; happy if he can relight his enthusiasm when it cools. No prudence won by experience, no steadiness gained through habit can compensate for the loss of youthful zest, and the prompt response of a fresh, unwearied will to the first vision of exalted aims.

Aims so exalted, so exacting, a life so clear-seeing, so

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<sup>1</sup> The way in which the story is introduced by the synoptists respectively is striking, and compels the reader to recognize great significance in the whole transaction. Matthew says that "Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil" (4 : 1). Mark's thought may not be so startling but his language is stronger : "Immediately the Spirit flings him out into the wilderness," or as it is familiarly translated, "drives him" (1 : 12). Luke, with characteristic historic fullness and discrimination states that "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness, forty days tempted of the devil" (4 : 1, 2). Combining these accounts we have a natural situation.



devoted, were never demanded of any as now of the Christ. He must be prepared for every turn of popular sentiment. His mind must be so occupied by his real objects that adulation will not be able to divert his purpose, nor hostility to make him waver. Above all, he must win such equipoise by steadily looking into all possibilities as never to be caught unawares. A new situation in which a man finds himself without previous consideration, either takes him by surprise, or he takes it stolidly as a mere matter of course. In either case its meaning is missed or its opportunity lost.

But meditation, which ought to prepare a man, may distract him by dwelling on some single factor in the case. To think beforehand is only less dangerous than not to do so. Meditation brings temptation. No doubt Luke was right in making the temptations of Satan extend over the forty days and culminate in three special enticements. To meet its true purpose reflection must be full, deliberate, thorough. Forty days was not too long to prepare even Jesus for such demands as he was about to face. Well for him if the long fast did not exhaust the spiritual energy received at his baptism.

It was not enough to think long, with only wild beasts as his indifferent companions. Our Lord must now be tested by disadvantages more formidable than come with the disabling weakness of age. His bodily vigor was sapped by a protracted fast. How he endured it we know not; but afterward, as Luke tells us, the distress of starvation made itself felt. "He hungered." Moses and Elijah had undergone the same test on the wild Mountain of the Law. Comparison is instructive.

These hardiest souls in Hebrew history had not quite

stood up to the trial. Moses passed his retirement in the Law-giver's presence. So close was this man to his Maker that he dared expostulate with God in behalf of the sottish people who fancied that Jehovah could be worshiped as a calf. But Moses' own spirit broke loose when he came in view of the idolatrous revels. The meekness, which was largely his power, gave way to impatience; impatience with the people turned to petulance toward Jehovah, and Moses dashed against the foot of the mountain the tables of stone which God's own hand had shaped and inscribed.

Elijah too, on the heels of his spectacular and bloody triumph over the priests of Baal, fled from the enraged Jezebel in such a reaction of moral weakness that he begged to die. And although a kindly angel awoke and fed him again and again during the heavy sleep of despondency under the juniper tree, he was at length fully aroused only to feel again the impulse of terror, and to flee in "the strength of that meat forty days and nights" to the holy mountain. Horeb, or Sinai, quite closes the Valley of Rest and looks like the end of the world. There could seem no chance for further flight nor need of any, so stern, so savage, so lonely is the venerated mountain of the Ancient Law. In one of its caves Elijah was lodged. There, like Moses, he talked with God and saw God's glory. But he could scarcely be lifted out of despair. The extraordinary daring which shortly before had faced a wicked court, defied a hostile priesthood, and subdued an unfaithful nation, now utterly collapsed. It is not always easy for the spirit to be willing when the flesh is weak.

Yet all the while Moses and Elijah had been with God. Satan was with Christ. They had the most perfect shelter, he the completest exposure. Whatever suggestions of wrong were natural in his physical extremity, these the Evil One was at hand to press; whatever power Jesus showed to rise above physical extremity, this the Evil One was ready to pervert. Even his divinity did not save him from solicitations to wickedness; it exposed him to these solicitations.

He had been saluted at his baptism as Son of God. This led to corresponding trials. He was challenged as Son of God to make stones bread, and to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple. The final overture to accept from Satan the rulership of this world was addressed to one who had come into the world to be king, and whose consciousness of such a destiny was also a consciousness of superhuman fitness. It has been said that, if Jesus were Son of God, he could not be tempted. The reverse is true. He could not have been so tempted had he not been Son of God. He was tempted as God's Son; expressly as such. He was tempted in all points like as we are (Heb. 4 : 15), but we could not be tempted in all points like as he was. His humanity made him like his brethren in ordinary exposures (Heb. 2 : 17, 18), but his divinity made him solitary from first to last in his chief trials. We could no more share the extremity of his temptations, than "one Simon, a Cyrenian," could bear the real burden of his cross. All our temptations could visit him, the most urgent of his could never be addressed to us. The horror with which we repel the thought of the divine being tempted ought at least to

appreciate the humility and devotion which, through acceptance of man's limitations, made it possible for the tempter to approach the Only-begotten of the Highest.

If to the question "Whence"? the answer "From Satan" has not been given, this is because this answer would lend no light to our inquiry. Without doubt Satan was the tempter; but equally without doubt each of his suggestions would of itself at some moment arise in the mind of Jesus, and it was important that all the issues so raised should be met at the outset. In no case could a personal devil receive more direct recognition than the narrative of the temptation gives to Satan; but no diabolic art could offer any inducement to a course which it would not be natural for Christ to think of, and natural to wish for. The Spirit of Good hurried to the conflict with the Spirit of Evil; but the field on which they fought, and for which they fought, was the field of the desires and the decisions, the motives and the choices, of him who was at once the son of Mary and the Son of God. In the end it had to be Christ that won, or Christ that lost.

## (2) How the Temptations?

With conservative minds there is a widespread and reverent incredulity as to the temptation of the divine in Christ. To think it possible seems to invite the still more shocking possibility that Jesus might sin. But we know that he was tempted; how he could be tempted may be plainer if we succeed in penetrating the real nature of temptation.

Without native desires to appeal to, temptation would

be impossible. But desire is nothing else than the longing of organs and faculties to act. The demand of bodily organs is appetite, that of mental faculties we may call appetence. And we must consider not only the several organs and faculties, but also their relations. A man is an organism, that is, he is a set of related organs. Furthermore, as organs and faculties are related in the organism man, so men are related in the higher organism society. Indeed, religion itself is but an organic, social relation between man and God. All human powers, then, find in employment the reason for their existence, and nature provides in desire a motive to their employment.

Desire to use a faculty normally is thus not only innocent but indispensable. Without appetites and appetences we would act with reluctance, and our powers might shrivel through disuse. Had we no native relish for food the frequent call to meals would be an insufferable annoyance. But desires may be either normal or abnormal. The use of an organ may be abnormal only because disproportionate. The mouth may like to eat too much for the stomach. In an entirely normal being excess would be checked by a stronger desire for orderly organic relations.

Now among organic impulses in rational beings one is the supreme norm for all the others. That normative, organic, rational longing is to do the will of God. But in the abnormal the desire to do right and please God is not so strong as the desire for abnormal indulgence in some particular. Temptation, then, is an invitation to abnormal desire, a provocation of desire to overstrain a faculty, or to disturb the due harmony of faculties.

How, then, could Christ be tempted? We can see that, having all human powers he could feel all sorts of proper human desires, for all his faculties would naturally demand and really need exercise; and any one power might of itself demand too much. Among all his appetites and appetences, since he was without sin, none could be so strong as his love to be right and to please his Father. And yet, if we were not mistaken in deciding that Jesus inherited from his mother a liability to temptation, we must also conclude that it was only his supreme love for God and righteousness which saved him from allowing in himself abnormal desires. His human descent might not weaken his love for right, but it might strengthen any susceptibility to wrong. We can understand, for example, that, if his mother's family had been given for generations to strong drink, although without drunkenness, he might have inherited a taste for such liquids, and therefore have been liable to temptation in this direction. Now if Mary's family had no "family failings," at least they were by nature lovers of themselves more than of God; for that is the common lot. Christ, therefore, without sharing this excess of self-love, and feeling only due regard for himself, might be tempted in some way to more than normal self-regard and self-indulgence. In other words, he could be tempted to the one sin which, as a principle of conduct, includes all sinning. How did he escape from the clutch of all temptation?

### **(3) Temptations Withstood**

While the chief stress of temptation seems actually to have assailed Jesus as divine, we must make haste



to say that it was as a man he resisted and overcame. His divinity drew upon him the trial, but did not secure to him the victory. Was he bidden to use creative power and turn stones into bread? The good Spirit taught him to repel a temptation so far beyond us, in the same way we have to repel our meaner temptations: "Man shall not live by bread alone." Was he challenged to throw himself from the pinnacle because God's angels had a charge concerning him? His reply was one suitable to us, the stern prohibition of Deuteronomy to the murmuring tribes: "Ye shall not tempt Jehovah your God" (Deut. 6 : 16). Did Satan offer him at once the kingdoms which he meant ages afterward to rule? That vision, the last and most alluring, a vision which could hardly visit the dreams of a human conqueror, was dispelled by the command with which fickle Hebrews had been rallied against false gods: "Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; him shalt thou serve" (Deut. 10 : 20). The Spirit that taught Jesus to say all this, provides us with the same teaching. In equipping him with our armor, the Spirit proves the sufficiency of that armor for us.

Here the help received from the Holy Spirit may be observed. The Spirit, we may be sure, gave Christ no inopportune, officious help, but the Spirit helped him. It afforded to him, as to us, the ministry of the truth. It kept his mind open to all pertinent reality, and his heart thereby full of all fitting desires. If the Evil Spirit reminded him with evil intent that he was Son of God, the Holy Spirit reminded him with holy purpose what man owes to God. Weak from long fasting his very flesh might have hinted what the tempter



patly said, that he could make bread from stones. It was a temptation within the range of his own co-ordinated powers; but the Holy Spirit reminded him of a wonder which any man can compass; he can feed on the words of God—and how many a fierce hunger have those words appeased. On the pinnacle, where his weakened body very likely tottered toward a fall, trust in his Father might suggest what the tempter truthfully stated, that, if he let himself fall, angels would be charged to bear him up. It was a temptation which dared obtrude within the Father's loving embrace; it sought to thrust the Son away from his Father's breast; but the Holy Spirit reminded him that one must not childishly brave a father who so loved his child. Christ's fitness to rule men, and his very love for men, might ask whether it were not well to take at once the kingship over the whole world; and that was Satan's offer. It was a temptation which covered the widest range of our Lord's human relations. Every calling has its moral exposures. The third was the temptation peculiar to his Messiahship. But the Holy Spirit, of late so decisively bestowed, did not withdraw when the spirit of evil drew near. Christ was equipped with full defense against the seductions of his office. He was not permitted to forget that he was to rule men only by serving God.

In thus confronting temptation, as in accepting baptism, Christ shared the common lot, for all men have native desires which are capable of excess and misdirection. But he also shared our lot in enjoying the guardianship of the Holy Spirit. If we can imagine that at such an emergency the Spirit did not hasten to his aid,

certainly Christ did just what the Spirit enables men to do. It was with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," that he withstood the enemy; and to put that weapon in our hand, to minister the truth for us, is the all-inclusive office of the Holy Spirit to men. In resorting to this weapon Christ surely knew its temper and tried its edge; and it is in the same way that for us also the ministry of the truth establishes convictions on the throne of our hearts. Every faculty tests the word, and finds its temper true. Intellect is equipped with sound thought, sensibility with healthful emotion, and will with moral power. The Holy Spirit does all this for us; did he less for Christ? Indeed, the Spirit's offices to our Lord are an inspiring example of his benefactions to men. Then and now his service is one and the best.

#### (4) Typical

The temptations thus successfully withstood by Jesus are generally regarded as typical. In kind they are indeed representative of our temptations, although in degree our opportunities for evil cannot equal the severity of the Master's trial. Rival interpretations have been urged and not without a certain asperity in debate. But of these interpretations the most important do not appear to exclude each other. On the contrary, that a temptation is typical in one particular fits it to be so in another. All virtues fuse together, and James teaches us that all sin is one (2 : 10).

The first temptation coming on Jesus, when after his long fast he began to feel famished (Matt. 4 : 2; Luke 4 : 2), the temptation to command stones into bread, is regarded by some as typical of temptations addressed

to sense. Others take it to be essentially a suggestion to use power selfishly. Why not both, if either? It would have been a work of sheer creation, a work how familiar to Him without whom nothing was made that was made! But now he was among men only as one that serves. If, then, we are to regard the temptation as essentially one to use divine power for himself, surely the pangs of hunger would give it poignancy. Or, if it was essentially a temptation to meet the tyrannic demands of sense, how much more imperious the demand for one who knew he was quite able to satisfy it. His reply was suitable to either interpretation: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In other words, let the will of God be done. Jesus would use his extraordinary powers no otherwise. He had come down from heaven not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him (John 6 : 38). His submission to God amounted to trust in God. For him every word of God was bread and would provide even bread.

Then the tempter used his loyal trust as the avenue for another temptation: "Cast thyself down, for he shall give his angels charge concerning thee. It is so written. Such is the word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." It was a temptation to carry trust into presumption and make a venture which God had never authorized, still less required. But others take it as a temptation to vainglorious display. Jerusalem would see Jesus floating in the air, would perhaps own him as the Messiah coming gently down from heaven. Now if this trial could have the one meaning, why not also the other? Presumptuously to thrust himself on

the miraculous care of God would most likely be also an outburst of vanity. Or, if Jesus made a display of his angelic aids, so unwarranted a venture would of necessity have been a tempting of God. The very exaltation of soul, which the pang of hunger might serve still further to stimulate, as in the case of many ascetics, would expose Jesus, as saintly men are often exposed, to a subtle and dangerous suggestion, namely, that to make display of their security, while it would gain for themselves singular credit with men, might also singularly honor God. It would invite faith. What better? But a fall from the pinnacle is a far fall. For Jesus to yield would have been to turn himself into a tempter, a tempter of God. This he would not be. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," said he.

"Well spoken," quoth Satan. "Do not demand from God more than you must. Behold, then, the kingdoms of the world and all their glory. Accept them from me." Some say it was an appeal to ambition, "the last infirmity of noble minds"; but others see in it the project which has proved most dangerous of all to the Lord's people, the project which turned the church for ages into a dependency of Satan. It is thus at first the temptation to use other than spiritual means for spiritual ends; afterward it becomes a temptation to despiritualize those ends, that is, to secularize, paganize, even to demonize the church. Yet it is precisely ambition for worldly authority to which is most persuasively addressed the temptation to a complete perversion of the church, to turning the very kingdom of God into a kingdom of the Evil One. Such an ambition would of itself, sooner or later, unconsciously

subvert the whole mission of Christ. How indispensable his personality to his office. He was to be King, but meekness and not ambition should make him King. Recognizing the ruinously diabolical character of the offer made to him, he abruptly closed the scene: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Jesus triumphed completely over Satan by submitting wholly to God. Loyalty to God is at the bottom of all righteousness and alone able to disarm temptation.

#### (5) Recurrent

Matthew says that after Satan left him angels came and ministered to him (4 : 11); but Luke, who seems to see most deeply into these initial transactions, notes that the devil "departed from Jesus for a season" (4 : 13). Temptation was suspended, but not ended. Jesus all his life had to endure the contradiction of sin as well as of sinners against himself. The fact seems quite overlooked that the wilderness trials were vehemently and in swift succession renewed near the end of the earthly experiences of Jesus. He had suffered from hunger in the wilderness; he was in an agony in Gethsemane. There he had been able to endure the pain; here he thrice entreated that the cup might pass from him. But as in the wilderness he was able to say, "Man shall live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," in the garden, knowing that he was not to live but to die, he steadfastly repeated, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26 : 39). Loyalty to God was, as we have seen, the impenetrable armor which turned the thrust of every temptation. "God's will,

not mine," was an exorcism always too potent for the tempter. On the temple's pinnacle it had been Satan that promised Jesus the angels would take care of him; in the garden it was Jesus who said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26 : 53.) He had grown used to snares, knew they were there, could always detect them and speak calmly of them. When he was crucified we hear again from chief priests and scribes and elders the peculiarly diabolical suggestion, "If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matt. 27 : 41, 42).

It is strange that this final temptation, the most audacious of all, invited him to do what all Jews were expecting from their Messiah, what even the forerunner in his prison seemed to be looking for. Again and again popular enthusiasm renewed its pressure; but the multitude, which would make him a captive in order to make him a king, little knew that they were urging rudely what the prince of this world had commodiously offered in vain. And as little were the contemptuous scribes aware that by their mouths Satan was renewing his most seductive and wickedest offer, the offer to make him king if even at the last Christ would come down from the cross. No doubt those mockers would have been ready to give him such a kingdom as could be won in such a way. No doubt Satan would eagerly have taken their offer in earnest and performed for Christ that wonder. But this would have been to accept of all mockeries the most hideous. It asked the Messiah to set at naught his own mission in the hour



of its culmination and to consent that his career should become a futility and folly. But he had received from his Father a commandment to lay down his life (John 10 : 18), nor solicitation nor mockery could divert him from obedience. It had been the Holy Spirit that drove him into the wilderness and now it is "through the eternal Spirit that he offers himself without spot unto God" (Heb. 9 : 14).

### (6) Outcome

What then was gained by the formal and by the moral installation of Jesus as the Christ? What were the results to him of the baptism and the temptation? It is impossible that the effects of such a two-fold induction into office should not be incalculably important. Not to lose ourselves in speculative endeavors to penetrate the consciousness and character of our Lord, we may regard a few results as certain, and these certain results will be found most momentous. They fall into two classes: results to himself; results to his relationships.

#### a. For Christ

He faced his mission. Knowing himself Son of God and knowing that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, he knew himself the appointed head of that kingdom and that he must claim his office. Did he know in advance what consequences this claim would involve for him? On this point agreement cannot be hoped for. It must be admitted that we are not expressly informed. But those who believe the divine powers of our Lord not to have been under any but a voluntary restraint



from day to day will feel sure that Christ from the first foresaw his entire career and its consequences ; whereas, those who believe that the character and mind of our Lord still continued to develop in wisdom and in divine favor may question whether as yet he foresaw the cross and its necessity as the price of his crown. But what John the Baptist knew he too must have known, that he was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1 : 29). It is at least probable that he knew the Lamb to be destined for sacrifice. At any rate, he faced his mission and he clearly saw how much was at present required of him.

When for this mission the descent of the Spirit anointed him, he also then dedicated himself. His mind was made up ; he saw the will of God and he would do the will of God.

With this active self-consecration he had also learned self-restraint. The positive virtue could not spare the negative. Self-restraint was a safeguard against those deflections of aim and vacillations of procedure which so easily and so hurtfully attend an unlooked-for allure-ment or annoyance, or alarm, or even fatigue. This steadiness and control of himself was the special fruit of his victory over temptation.

For Christ himself, then, the outcome of his dual installation was understanding, determination, and self-control.

#### **b. From Christ**

A fruit of his long trial in the wilderness was that Christ could sympathize with the tempted. This gain did not fail to be noticed by the reflective writer to the Hebrews. It made sure of sympathy just where men

most need it, that is, where they are weakest. Some, indeed, deny that divinity could sympathize with the tempted. But divinity would enable Christ merely as a looker-on to surpass all men in insight. Guileless Nathanael so understood it (John 1 : 49). To this we may add that there could be no lack of sympathy on the part of one who had "in all points been tempted like as we are" (Heb. 4 : 15). If he had sinned he might have had as little charity for his own faults when he saw them in others as is man's mean way. With a tainted soul he could not have been so touched with pity for our plight as his pure spirit was and is.

His sympathy enlisted his succor also. Of this we are assured in a passage which almost uniquely joins the Godward and manward fruits of his mission. Christ was "in all things made like unto his brethren"; therefore, Godward he could be "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God (*τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν*), to make reconciliation for the sins of the people"; and manward "in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2 : 17, 18). Sympathy and succor are the gains of the temptation to the relations of Christ with men, not to speak of the fitness it gave him to serve as our high priest Godward.

If we but consider what the situation would have been had Christ never in this particular tasted our lot, we shall praise the Spirit that led him into and through his moral installation. His lonely victory in the wilderness made victory out in the world certain in advance. From that single combat Christ goes "in the power of

the Spirit" (Luke 4 : 14) to fight the campaign through. The enemy had been beaten but not destroyed. He must even win a seeming success against Christ, for it will be only "through death that Christ will be able to destroy him that hath the power of death" (Heb. 2 : 14), and Christ learned in the wilderness to accept whatever the will of God should prescribe as conditions of achieving his mission and bringing it to a triumphant close.

## CHAPTER IX

### CHRIST AIDED

THE thought that Christ depended to any degree, either personally or officially on the aid of the Holy Spirit is unfamiliar and may be unwelcome to many. They think of him as having had in himself all sufficiency for all needs, ours and his own. But in confronting the explicit statements of the New Testament that the Spirit so aided him, one who is timidly averse to all tampering with these mysteries may be reassured by considering that the utmost which the Spirit does for Christ only illustrates the ordinary yet little regarded interrelations of Father, Son, and Spirit.

These interrelations are fully as compatible with the highest as with the lowest view of Christ's and the Spirit's nature. Each divine Person, to be sure, has his own office. No interchange could be thought of. We cannot imagine the Holy Spirit as incarnated, nor as sending the Father from the Son. And yet no function is ascribed to one of the Three exclusively. That the Three are undivided in substance thus finds fit illustration. For example, God the Father is familiarly the Creator; "He laid the foundations of the earth" (Ps. 104 : 5); "of him are all things" (1 Cor. 8 : 6). But it was "by his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26 : 13); and yet again, "Without the Word was not anything made that was made" (John 1 : 3). God is also the Preserver of all which he has

made (Neh. 9 : 6); but "through the Son all things consist" (Col. 1 : 17), and "the Spirit of God is in our nostrils" (Job 27 : 3). To be the Saviour of men would seem the exclusive office of the Son; yet "the only wise God is our Saviour" (Jude 25). To renew the spirit of a man is the characteristic function of the Spirit of God (Titus 3 : 5); but God himself, without distinction of persons, "hath quickened us" (Eph. 2 : 5); the Father and the Son each "quickens whom he will" (John 5 : 21); and Christ virtually offers renewal where he offers "rest to our souls" (Matt. 11 : 29). Co-operation by all does not mean incapacity in any. On the contrary, co-operation could not well be wanting if the Three in person are in essence One. We are therefore to look for participation by the Holy Spirit in the mission of Christ. In no branch, in no detail of that mission will the Spirit's aid be wanting.

It is not, then, a fact to be forced on orthodox souls by dint of appeal to neglected scriptures; it should rather be welcomed as an authorized sign that Jesus was the Christ, and that Christ was very Son of God. Prophecy forecasts the Spirit's offices to the Messiah, and the evangelical narrative did not overlook this fact. "Behold my servant whom I have chosen," quotes Matthew (12 : 18) from Isaiah (42 : 1), "my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him." For the forerunner, the last of the old-time prophets, there were two infallible tokens of the Messiah: that the Holy Spirit rested upon him, and that he in turn baptized with the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3 : 11). The final duty of the Messiah, in closing out his embassy on earth, was "through the Holy Ghost to give

commandment unto the apostles whom he had chosen " (Acts 1 : 2). In a word, the co-operation of the Spirit with our Lord is ever represented as altogether special and signal. We are assured of it again and again, and it need not disturb our loyal jealousy for the honor of Christ, that the Spirit of God acted an important part in the entire course of the personal life of Jesus, and in all that was required of the Christ officially.

### 1. Personally

It is doubtful whether a single text, strictly interpreted, answers the question what Jesus personally owed to the good offices of the Holy Spirit. Texts which declare the Spirit's part in the official activities of Christ are sometimes taken as illustrations of personal benefits to Jesus. This is not altogether absurd. Jesus was not like Balaam a mouthpiece to be used and cast aside. Still, official help is not necessarily personal, nor personal help official. The power conferred by the Spirit might be congruous with the character of a prophet, yet not due to his character. It is not necessary to believe that, in making Jesus competent for functions, the Holy Spirit always strengthened and adorned his character. The passages, then, which tell us that Christ was endued with power to work miracles, or given an anointing to preach the good news, or vested with authority which Simon Magus tried to buy, the authority to bestow on others the wonder-working charisms, these passages, although among them is John's declaration that Jesus received the Spirit without measure (John 3 : 34), are all deferred to the topic which may claim them, that of

official helps. No text remains to which we may make unhesitating appeal to tell us what was the ordinary personal relation of the Spirit to Jesus.

We must have recourse to inference, with due sense of its precariousness, and corresponding modesty as to its results. But we may begin with an undoubted fact: Jesus shared our lot. "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2 : 17). If, then, the defense against our liabilities is in the steady companionship of the Paraclete; if good counsel to us in perplexity is from the Spirit of wisdom and a sound mind; if we know the truth because we are led by the Spirit of truth; if righteousness is fostered for us by the indwelling Spirit of holiness; if serenity and courage are ours by the brooding of the Spirit of peace, and the good cheer of the Spirit of adoption; if, when the case grows desperate, we may at least groan our inarticulate desires, and can know that even then and thus the Spirit is making intercession for us according to the will of God; with all this true for us, we do not dare perhaps to say that the Spirit's fellowship and help, which are the chief of our present privileges and the earnest of our inheritance, were needed for Jesus as we need them; but we cannot easily believe that he lacked, if we have them. Was his lot in no way more exalted than ours? His portion of the Spirit could hardly be less. Sometimes we feel that we have alienated that heavenly companion, but surely Jesus never repulsed the Holy Spirit. From the fact that the Holy Spirit is given to God's children we may infer that he was given to the Son of God.

This inference is supported by a further fact, that



the divine in Jesus was in some way limited by the human. In what way limited the interests of our theme do not require us to decide. Stout Calvinists have held that, while divine powers without limit belonged to Jesus, their employment was limited. Or it may be, as others maintain, that the powers of Jesus were less than infinite. On either view there would be a fitness, and even a need, of the Holy Spirit's aid. Leaving out of account just now all aids in Messianic offices, we see that the personal Jesus, in consequence of his limitations, whatever they were, must have had his liabilities and his needs.

The most comprehensive statement is the classic passage in the Epistle to the Philippians. Here the point to be made is practical. We ought to be as mindful of each other as Christ Jesus was of us. And to make this point Paul opens the mystery of our Lord's self-renunciation. So transcendent a doctrine never had another so practical application. Our Lord emptied himself of that mode of existence which was peculiar to the Godhead, accepting in its place the mode of existence which was peculiar to a servant, becoming, that is, like a man (Phil. 2 : 5-7). That a self-renunciation so extreme involved letting go the riches of the universe was its least astounding accompaniment, although this result is mentioned by Paul (2 Cor. 8 : 9). A more radical consequence was that, in becoming a servant like man, the Lord of heaven came like man into need of direction and support. This need was real, not a mere appearance. What he gave up as divine must be made good to him by the divine Spirit. If he must obey, as God's servant, he must be guided by the Spirit of God

Jesus himself made sweeping statements about his limitations, and sometimes made them, strangely enough, by way of asserting his authority. These passages must come under our attention in connection with the Holy Spirit's aids to the official Christ. It will be enough just now to notice their peculiarity. For example, his reply when the Jews charged him with breaking the Sabbath, and making himself equal with God. In this reply he singularly and characteristically claimed divine power to do everything in confessing that of his own motion he could do nothing (John 5 : 18 f.). This was true of his teaching also (ver. 30). He spoke the words of God (John 3 : 34), he taught the doctrine of God (John 7 : 16). Who but the Spirit taught him?

How different his way of knowing must have been from God's way we are notified by the fact that only the Father knew the day of the Son's return to earth. God knows intuitively, that is, knows the whole and every object in it by itself and directly, face to face, as the eye knows. If Jesus had known in this way, he would have known the date of his future coming, as though it were a fact seen by itself. But his knowledge was in part, like ours, a knowledge of things as related; that is, it was in part inferential and limited knowledge. But he could not see through the whole series of future events to its end in his own reappearance. At some points, if he was to know, he needed the Spirit's teaching, which teaching he did not at all points enjoy.

The course of his life answers to his own loving protestation, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14 : 28).

Was not infancy for him a period of undeveloped faculties? And while the doctors in the temple listened to his questions and answers, were not Joseph and Mary anxiously looking for him, because, like any other lad of twelve he ought not to be left to shift for himself in a strange and crowded city? Was not the subjection to "his parents" which followed natural and wholesome? Did he not actually grow, as he seemed to, in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man? (Luke 2 : 46-52.) And the daily recurrence of sleep, with its suspension of rational processes, was this not as real to Jesus all his life as weariness was? (Mark 4 : 38 ; John 4 : 6.) As he grew, had he only the outer guidance of parents, and when he was grown, of the Book?

Then was he free from moral limitations? God cannot be tempted (James 1 : 13), but Jesus was open to all our temptations (Heb. 4 : 15). Could this have been if the divine in him were not hampered by the human? What did his prayers imply? Were they only acts of communion with God? The occasions for them forbid this conjecture. Sometimes he prayed for others; sometimes for himself; always for something to be got only by prayer. He prayed that when Peter's fidelity failed his faith might not also fail (Luke 22 : 32). He promised to pray for the sending of the Comforter (John 14 : 16). He prayed for his disciples as he did not pray for the world. He prayed that God would keep them from the evil. He prayed for all who through them would in the future believe in him. And he prayed for himself. Once in an agony he prayed that he might be spared the cross. It was to One who was able to save him from death. And that prayer was

heard ; but it was the will of the Father that he should die. Long before he had prayed at his baptism, and the heavens were opened, and the Spirit came down. He went up into a mountain to pray, and the fashion of his countenance was altered, his raiment became white and glistering, Moses and Elijah came back to earth to talk with him, and a voice fell from the overshadowing cloud, " This is my elect Son " (Luke 9 : 29-35). It is Luke who, as usual, lays hold of these significant incidents. He tells us that Jesus prayed all night before choosing the Twelve (6 : 12, 13), and it was after he had been at prayer that the disciples asked and received the brief model for prayer (11 : 1-4). But Matthew and Mark also note how he would go apart to pray (Matt. 14 : 23 ; Mark 1 : 35). They allow us, they even require us, to suppose that with Jesus as with us there was a moral need of prayer.

It is considerations like these which show how completely Jesus entered into our estate, and thus certify that the life of Jesus illustrated the service of the Holy Spirit to men, as well as the service that men owe to God. If Jesus had no such need, the Spirit could hardly seem indispensable in our case. If that need were not met for him, what assurance could there be that it would be met for us ? That the Spirit's presence was so plainly shown in emergencies, would seem to justify the conviction which modern study of Jesus has reached, that for ordinary occasions, if during the public life of Jesus there were such, the ordinary offices of the Holy Spirit were never wanting. Jesus owed his nativity to the Spirit of God, and all his life, we may believe was transfused by that ever-renewed divine energy. If it was so

for him, it may be so for us. If the aid of the Holy One could be so momentous then, it is indispensable now.

## **2. Officially**

As already stated it is not left us to infer or presume the relations of the Holy Spirit to the Christ. On this matter the New Testament evidently seeks to assure our faith by assuring us of his aids. These aids will extend to all branches of his mission. He was helped—

### **(1) In Teaching**

This point was covered by his sweeping protestations to the Jews: "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge" (John 5 : 30); "As the Father hath taught me I speak these things" (8 : 28); and especially his searching declaration to the Twelve: "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (14 : 10). It is not the highest imaginable claim. Aid like this was promised to the apostles: "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. 10 : 20). Such aid made Christ and his messengers prophets and renders the activity of the Spirit certain in all these cases alike.

But the parity goes no further. As to the copiousness of the inspiration it was said of the Master, "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure" (John 3 : 34). Of Christ alone and his supernal knowledge could the Baptist declare, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1 : 18). Nor

would any other prophet claim for himself what Christ claimed, or what the evangelists claimed in his behalf: "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3 : 13); or most persuasively, while most authoritatively: "No one fully knows the Son except the Father; nor does any one fully know the Father except the Son, and him to whom the Son may choose to reveal him" (Matt. 11 : 27).

However immediate and full the Son's knowledge of the Father, the Holy Spirit not only taught through Christ, but taught Christ himself. As a youth Jesus was no doubt tutored in the Old Testament. It has not of late occurred to any one that this was inconsistent with his divinity. He was a real boy. If as such, and later he could be subject to his parents in Nazareth, how much more subject to the truth as set forth by the Spirit of God in the ancient Oracles? Then when it came his turn to teach why should not the Spirit minister the truth through him? If there still seem any incongruity between direct knowledge of God and knowledge by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the more that incongruity is pressed the more rapidly it will disappear. Emphasize to the utmost that Christ must intuitively know God, and know God most intimately if he is himself God; then on the other hand insist as sharply as possible on the importance to him of the Spirit's communications; and now two things appear in ever-growing distinctness: First, if the divine constitutes the personal Christ by union with the human, our Lord will be sedulously kept by the Holy Spirit in communion with the Father; secondly, if he whom we call



the Son of God was before the incarnation an equal Person in the Godhead, then, pre-eminently then, the divine Spirit would be in effect what its name ever implied, *the eternal outbreathing* to Son from Father, and *inbreathing* to Father from Son.

When the angry Jews attempted to kill Jesus because "he said God was his Father, making himself equal with God" did his reply seem to them to renounce his equality or to affirm it again? He said, "The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5 : 19). To disclaim independence this, just this, was to claim identity. When the Son is presented not as an ordinary mouthpiece, but as the very Word of God, then he is with God and is God.

After the earthly embassy of Christ is closed it will be the Spirit's turn not to "speak from himself, but whatever he shall hear to speak"; yes, and to "glorify Christ, to receive of Christ's and show it." This for the reason which the Master gave, entering into the depths of the matter: "All things that the Father has are mine; therefore the Spirit shall receive of mine, and show it unto you" (John 16 : 13-15). May we not feel persuaded that meantime Jesus was reminded of his own, led into deeper understanding of his own, qualified better to show his own to men when the Spirit took of the Father's and showed it unto him?

## (2) In Miracles

There is no ground for questioning that the miracles of Christ were ascribed by him and by all who believed in him, to the Spirit of God. Whatever else they might



mean this lesson they must first teach, that God was with Christ. It was a lesson to the dullest ear and it opened the ear for further instruction. Whatever power resided in Christ himself it was not so important yet to exhibit this as to prove that God was with him. And for most people this first lesson of his miracles remained the last. The congenitally blind man to whom Christ gave sight could not miss such a point. "If this man were not of God he could do nothing"; and this made him ready to accept Jesus as Son of God so soon as Jesus was ready to declare himself (John 9 : 33, 37, 38). When about to call Lazarus from the tomb Christ will first have it understood that God hears him (John 11 : 42). From the time of his baptism and temptation the miracles of Christ are referred to "the power of the Spirit" with which he returned into Galilee, and his fame began (Luke 4 : 14); and years later, when Peter carried the good news to a Gentile, Christ was still to him one whom God had "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10 : 38). If Christ would give his followers private justification for their faith it was by citing what Isaiah had foretold concerning the servant of Jehovah, that the Spirit of God should be upon him (Matt. 12 : 18); or if those who were ready to blaspheme the Holy Spirit could be publicly checked it would be by the thought that, when Christ by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God had come unto them (ver. 28).

We have here to recall and bear in mind that in connection with miracles *the Spirit of God* meant the power of God. The custom of both Testaments is uniform on this point until we reach in passing the Master's

promise that by the personal Paraclete believers should do works greater than his own (John 14 : 12), and Paul's exposition of the Spirit's work to the Corinthians, which as was noted above (Chapter II.), casually recognizes indeed that the Spirit is a person, but prevailingly offers his energy as impersonal. The Master's own miracles took place at a period so early in the doctrine of the Spirit as not to furnish any hint of the idea that Christ wrought his miracles by aid of the Third Person in the Godhead, rather than by that impersonal power which served the same purpose with the prophets. This of course is not to deny that the Third Person did this office alike for Christ and his old-time messengers, but it is to recognize that no such personal meaning is anywhere expressed in the biblical record.

However, the matter of chief concern to present day study is not a settlement of questions about the personal or impersonal meaning of the title *Holy Spirit* in connection with miracles. One most impressive, if not imperative, question is Christological. In working miracles did Christ depend on the aid of the Spirit of God as completely as did the old-time prophets and new-time apostles? Or was the power of God which the title *Spirit of God* implies, a power resident in Christ and distinctly his own? It should be admitted to begin with that by *Spirit of God* could never be understood a power which was the miracle-worker's own. It must always be frankly recognized as a power specially conferred. And yet this quite obvious interpretation, this recognition of a usual meaning as the present meaning, does not answer the question whether

Christ had no greater power of his own than a prophet or an apostle had.

Not a few oppose a special claim for the Nazarene prophet. They may not deny, they perhaps maintain his proper divinity, but all unite in holding that when he became a man he so thoroughly emptied himself of divine power and prerogatives, became so strictly and exclusively like other men a servant, that not only must he like them take orders and obey, but must share their weakness and dependence (Phil. 2 : 6-8). A recent estimate of Christ ascribes to him more than ordinary, yet not unprecedented human powers. This "New Thought" declares that a few rare spirits, quite apart from other good men in piety and virtue, reveal a strange mastery over the infirmities, both moral and physical, which are found in other men. Jesus being wholly, or mostly untainted by sin, thus became lord of life and could be popularly represented as conqueror of one that had the power of both sin and death.

But if the record expressly enough teaches that the Holy Spirit wrought miracles through Christ it just as distinctly ascribes to him power which no other man ever possessed. While he was like his apostles in enjoying the aid of the Spirit, he was unlike them in being himself a source of power over human ills. Apostles never said of themselves, even when the sick were healed by handkerchiefs and aprons taken from their person (Acts 19 : 12), what Christ said of himself, "I perceive that virtue has gone out of me" (Luke 8 : 46). "Why look ye so earnestly on us," demanded Peter, "as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? . . . His name, through faith in

his name hath made this man strong " (Acts 3 : 12, 16). No apostle claimed that miracles were given or not as he chose ; but Christ said to the leper, " I will, be thou clean " (Matt. 8 : 3). Of all his miracles the most impressive in itself and in its circumstances was the raising of Lazarus. But when the faith of Martha ran forward to she knew not what, and ventured so far as to say, " Even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give thee," yet drew back from a hint that her brother would rise again before the last day, can any one doubt that precisely what Jesus meant was to have himself accepted as the source of life ? " I am the resurrection and the life " (John 11 : 22-25). The stilling of the tempest when it first took place fairly raised with his fellow-voyagers the question what manner of man Jesus was (Matt. 8 : 27) ; but occurring a second time, it left no question ; they worshiped him as Son of God (Matt. 14 : 33). If any miracle wrought by an apostle had, or would have been allowed to have, such an effect on his instructed and familiar followers, which was the miracle and which the apostle ? But if our Lord's disciples had held their peace the " floods would have clapped their hands " and the winds would have cried out.

How, then, are we to construe the association of the Holy Spirit with our Lord's own power in the working of miracles ? It is a possible but a non-natural supposition that Christ had, indeed, superhuman powers, but that a deficiency in these needed to be supplemented by the Holy Spirit. Hardly less factitious would be the notion that the Holy Spirit was needed at first, but that the Lord's own powers steadily grew toward unaided adequacy for all his purposes. A partial, and in

no way offensive, explanation would be that the Spirit wished to co-operate with Christ, in order by co-operation to make it plain that God acknowledged him (John 10 : 38). Such an association of the Master and the Spirit would leave still open the question, What could Christ unaided have accomplished? The question is idle and must be left unanswered. To be sure, we may always fall back on the co-action of the three Persons in the Godhead. No one of them was isolated. In particular the entire course of the Master's life revealed a close union with God. And so if the Spirit's aid was not necessary at least it was fitting.

Being events out of the ordinary, miracles always challenge attention. As unmistakably due to super-human power they turn attention to God. They put the question, What is his will? Sometimes they answer it. As aids to the theocracy they often went as straight to their end as any act of a human king. Under the new dispensation the kingdom was not of this world, and the miracles which attended its introduction were directed toward spiritual ends. Indeed, it may be said that, addressed almost exclusively to the mind though wrought upon the body, the miracles of the New Testament were meant for teaching. Unlike the greater miracles of the Old Testament they harmed no one; they offered benefits to all, and so taught that God is good. If they could persuade men to trust in the love of God, that is what the gospel does. If we Christians love God it is "because he first loved us" (1 John 4 : 19).

Often the lesson was more specific, as when miracles certified that God had sent a new teacher. The widow

of Zarephath, when Elijah restored her boy to life, "knew that the word of Jehovah in his mouth was truth" (1 Kings 17 : 24). Miracles certified Christ to be a prophet. Nicodemus saw this and said it (John 3 : 2). The man who had been born blind put the Jews in a rage by insisting on this same point (John 9 : 30-34). Christ too claimed that his works were his Father's credential to him as a teacher (John 5 : 36); and when it came to raising Lazarus, the most which our Lord hoped for from the people that stood by, was to believe that God had sent him and now heard him (John 11 : 42).

To the sister of Lazarus the lesson of miracles was far more striking. The housewifely Martha, if she would believe, should see the glory of God (v. 40). Christ, who could be heard and seen with the eyes and looked at and handled, would now prove himself to be the resurrection and the life (v. 25). How far did such a miracle fall short of telling the Good News? How far short the miracle which proved that Christ had power on earth to forgive sin? (Matt. 9 : 6.) And when Jesus was in danger of a stoning because, as the Jews said, he "made himself God," did he not appeal to his works for justification even of such a claim as that? (John 10 : 33-38.) On this very point, that to see him was to see the Father, Jesus asked his disciples to believe "for the very works' sake" (John 14 : 9-11). Above and beyond all the miracle of his resurrection teaches what Christ is. But this point must be a little deferred. So far we find that the New Testament miracles, in particular those of Christ, teach at large how trustfully we should bear ourselves toward God, how confidently we may receive his messengers; above



all they show us what we should think of Christ. To make us sure on such a matter as this no irruption of divine power could be too extraordinary. No breach of nature's continuity could be too large a price to pay for the transformation of man's lot and man's aims and man's hopes and man's destiny. For miracle is not impracticable to God. To believe in it is not absurd.

There is something sacred in the laws of nature. Viewed at large they constitute the cosmic order which reveals God, and which by its harmony reveals that there is but one God. Viewed more narrowly laws of nature are the fixed properties of things, are all that make one class of objects differ from another class. To break natural laws would be to violate the constitution of nature. It would be to treat an object according to what it is not. That is, it would be an attempt to make a thing something else. This is self-contradictory. It is meaningless. It is utter absurdity, and God cannot be absurd. If he could be inclined to sacrifice the universal order which reveals him, still he could not succeed in violating a law of nature; for even God cannot make a thing to be and not to be at the same moment. The laws of nature, once nature is framed, are sacred. To violate them from one point of view would be sacrilege; from another point of view would be impossible.

But who finds anything sacred in the *course* of nature? I break it myself, I keep breaking it all the while. Everything that I do which inanimate nature could not do is an interruption of the course of nature, if it is no more than taking a step or drawing a long breath. Any beast can break into the course of nature.



A bird or a beaver does it when it builds its house. A bird or a beaver does it when it gathers food and eats it or feeds it to its young. A mere animal constantly violates the course of nature as much as God does by a miracle. The objection that miracle is irrational is an irrational objection.

Influenced by scientific deference to order in nature not a few present-day theologians try hard to find for miracle a place in nature. They construe it as only a prodigy, due to unknown physical causes. It is an eclipse of the humdrum sun ; it is the rush of a comet, no one can tell whence or whither, across our well-ordered sky. But an eclipse is no more a miracle than the full moon, and a comet is even less amazing than a fixed star. To undo miracles by finding for them some provision in nature might not be impossible, but when so undone they are no longer miracles and do no good.

A miracle is really what it seems, a departure from the course of nature, and unmistakably due to supernatural power. It is not, however, a violation nor a suspension of natural law. The course of nature is a series of events ; natural law is the order followed in the production of the several events. The course of nature takes place ; law never takes place. The course of nature is due to physical energy ; law is the method of energy. Energy is a cause, the course of nature is an effect ; law is neither a cause nor an effect, it is the way in which causes produce effects. The course of nature, then, is a series of effects or events in the physical sphere, produced by physical causes, each operating according to its own law. A miracle occurs when some power superior to man's interrupts the

course of events by counteracting or diverting a physical energy. But law is no more suspended when God works a miracle than when a man produces an artificial result. My will has an inexplicable ability—an ability as utterly beyond understanding as any creative act of God—to use the energy stored in my body, so as to back up a flowing stream, to trim a ship's sails to the breeze, to get up steam in an engine, to build bridges and cities, to prepare sumptuous clothing and feasts and statues and paintings and statecraft and war, to do all the artificial things which are quite as completely beyond the power of nature as to cure leprosy by a touch, or to raise the dead with a word. Those are man's artifices, miracles are God's artifices. His power, which is his Spirit, can work them if he finds occasion, and the mission of Christ furnished an imperative occasion.

### (3) In Suffering

The teachings of Christ drew upon him growing enmity from Jewish sects and leaders; his miracles precipitated the catastrophe. What he was used to saying was hateful alike to ceremonious Pharisees, rationalistic Sadducees, and worldly Herodians. If the mystical Essenes had come in contact with him their asceticism would no doubt have been affronted by the liberty he used. Those who spoke for the disciples of John and of the Pharisees raised against him this very objection (Luke 5 : 33). The objection which all felt to his teaching was its lofty and aggressive spirituality; his objection to the doctrine of the sects was its low and perverse unreality. The objection on both sides was thorough-going. Not that the Jewish sects were

irreligious, but their religion was perverted; not that Christ was austere, but to him an unspiritual religion was unreal. He knew that God requires truth in the inward parts. In face of such reality their religion was hypocrisy, perhaps only half-consciously; and yet the more zealous they were the more hypocritical. To such a state of facts what could his doctrine offer except denunciation? And it is remarkable that his most terrible reproaches were aimed at the most religious of the Jews.

His miracles exasperated the opposition. Without miracles the opposition would have been unimportant, because his following would have been unimportant. The populace might have relished now and again his bold rebukes of their religious guides, but it was his mighty works that drew all the world after him (John 12 : 19) and made the council more than half afraid that the Romans would come and take away their place and nation (John 11 : 47, 48).

The Spirit that taught and wrought through Christ thus led him up to the final trial, as it had led him into the trial of the wilderness. Only one passage in the New Testament distinctly states that the Holy Spirit had a share in the ultimate oblation. This is, of course, a passage which represents the offering as made by himself, "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9 : 13, 14.) There is little agreement among

exegetes as to the Spirit's part in the offering, because there is little agreement as to what is meant by *eternal Spirit*. Is it the Third Person? Is it the divine nature of Christ? Is it the total Christ? No one, so far as I have seen, has undertaken to determine first what so unique an Epistle means by *Holy Spirit*. It would seem fitting to let this priceless though peculiar document interpret itself.

The word *spirit* is found but twelve times in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In two instances it refers to angels (1 : 7, 14), in three to the spirits of men (4 : 12 ; 12 : 9, 23), leaving but seven occasions on which it refers to the Spirit of God. In three of these the reference is unquestionably to the Spirit which inspired the Old Testament (3 : 7 ; 9 : 8 ; 10 : 15). Here is nothing to exclude the New Testament idea of the Third Person ; but there is nothing to include it, and it would seem reasonable to understand an Old Testament function of the Spirit in the Old Testament sense of Spirit ; that is, as an impersonal influence from God. Besides our text, then, there remain but three references to the Spirit of God. In approaching these we are bound to keep in mind the principle that an established meaning is always presumably the present meaning of a word or expression, and that this presumption is conclusive against every new meaning which is without unequivocal support. It ought to be added that the Epistle to the Hebrews is the last document of all the New Testament which would attach novel meanings to Old Testament terms. It undertakes to show that the ancient dispensation found its purposed fulfillment in the new. But it does not attempt this by juggling with words.

It deals with ideas. It brings forward old-time words in the old-time sense, and shows that the law, when legitimately and fully understood, reached its flower and its fruitage in the new and imperishable gospel.

Thus three of the seven references to the Spirit of God are distinctly references to the Old Testament work of the Spirit, and three are left to aid in fixing the meaning of the fourth. Of these last three one refers to the witness which God gave to his own envoys "by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and distributions of the Spirit, according to his own will" (2 : 4). Instead of an implication that the distributed Spirit is a person, such a thought is obviously forced, especially as the distribution is not as the Spirit wills, but as God wills. Here at least the meaning of an apportioned influence is plain and seemly. The two remaining passages refer to the sin which cannot be forgiven. Of these the first speaks of the apostasy of those "who have been enlightened, have tasted of the heavenly gift and become partakers of the Holy Spirit" yet fall away (6 : 4-6) ; the second warns against the more shocking criminality of "trampling under foot the Son of God . . . and doing despite to the Spirit of grace" (10 : 29). If, at the outset, we had found the author of this Epistle familiar with the personality of the Spirit, these passages might, no doubt, be interpreted in harmony with that view ; but they do not at all require it. Their significance is as amply provided for as in the case of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (pp. 16, 17) by the idea which we found in all the other texts, the Old Testament idea of the Spirit as a special influence from God. It does not appear why that idea should here be de-

parted from, or what evidence can be cited for the introduction into this Epistle anywhere of the doctrine of the personal Paraclete.

If, then, the personal Paraclete is in mind, when our unknown expounder of new things by old tells us that Christ "offered himself through the eternal Spirit," it is the only passage in the Epistle where the personal Spirit seems to be thought of. It really is proper to ask what this passage would mean if it occurred in the Old Testament. Except for its reference to the blood of Christ it would not be unintelligible there. We recognize at once that it distinguishes against ceremonial righteousness and in favor of spiritual service, as in the well-known passage in Micah (6 : 8). Ceremonial sanctity belongs to the flesh, and is produced by application of blood to the flesh. If our passage had only blood to contrast with blood, as the direct means of sanctification, how would the spiritual result be provided for? It is a need at this point which occasions the reference to the self-oblation of Christ and to the participation of the eternal Spirit. When we follow the writer in working out the antithesis, three points of superiority are seen in the New Testament offering: first, the blood of Christ is in itself worth more than the blood of bulls and goats; secondly, the offering was made by co-operation of the eternal Spirit; thirdly, the high priest offered himself. The eternal Spirit was an ennobling and enabling influence from God, which made the offering more than one of blood. An offering through the eternal Spirit, even if it were only an offering of blood, was a spiritual offering. These points made the challenge fitting: How much more than any animal sacrifice availed



for cleansing human flesh, would this spiritual sacrifice avail to consecrate human spirits?

There would seem, then, no reason to find here a reference to the Third Person or to the Second Person in the Godhead, but only such co-operation in his passion as Christ received from the Spirit in all his work.

The oblation through the Holy Spirit, although expressly mentioned in but a single text, ought to relieve a painful surmise connected with another unique passage; namely, that God at the last moment forsook his Son, and even poured out on him the wrath due to human sin. That God actually abandoned his Son is a not unnatural interpretation of the outcry which Matthew and Mark leave on record in its peculiarly touching literalness: *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani* (Matt. 27 : 46; Mark 15 : 34); but the daring and awful conjecture that God was full of anger against Christ has no shadow of scriptural support. It is sheer theological audacity. It illustrates how irreverent against the Father the utmost reverence for Christ can be, until it is no longer true that he who honors the Son honors the Father who sent him (John 5 : 23). The prophecy of Isaiah is not forgotten: "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. . . It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief . . . thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (53 : 4, 10). But any one familiar with the Old Testament idiom is well aware that God is said himself to do whatever befalls his people. As Isaiah has it, "The Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation" (Isa. 10 : 5); while the more familiar psalm runs: "Deliver my



soul from the wicked which is thy sword, from men which are thy hand" (Ps. 17 : 13, 14). While, therefore, with the thorough-going Hebrew faith in God's overruling the little company of harried disciples could lift up their voice and say to high heaven, "Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done," this did not hinder Peter from exactly dividing the responsibility : "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 4 : 27, 28 ; 2 : 23). One must wonder how even a commercial view of atonement, the theory of *quid pro quo*, so much suffering by Christ for so much pardon to the elect, could lead to the dreadful fancy that God was angry when his Son became obedient even unto death. How could any one miss what Jesus himself said : "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life" ? (John 10 : 17.)

It is not even necessary to believe that God hid his face from Christ at the last moment. It is necessary only to admit that Christ no longer saw the Father's face. What the prophet foretold about men and Christ was true : "We hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised and we esteemed him not" (Isa. 53 : 3). One could wish that human sin had spared itself that shame. It was we that made him an offering for sin, and when we did it, we esteemed him not. But why should we think the Father too forsook him ? No doubt at the last Christ felt forsaken. No doubt he felt for a moment the chill and horror of the outer dark-

ness. There was enough to account for this, without saying that the Father turned away his face. And here the unique passage in the Hebrews comes to end our doubts. If the eternal Spirit took a part in the final offering of Christ so important that the offering may be described as made "through the Spirit," it is incredible that the Father withdrew his countenance. Any explanation ever offered would be less violent than that. The sacrifice was made unto God; if it was acceptable, how could he now be rejecting it? It was an act of obedience to him; how could he turn from that last proof of loyalty? It was made through the operation of his own Spirit; how refuse his countenance to what his Son and his Spirit were jointly engaged in? Christ might lack the sense of the Spirit's presence, as we do while he is helping us. Christ might lose sight of the Father's face; why not so share our lot? But that is all. He felt it was so; but it was not so. The darkness shut down upon him that the night may be light about his people. Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot unto God, that we may turn from all dying to living, from all unreality to reality, and in the completion of his spiritual service find the beginning of ours. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3 : 13, 14).

We have found the passage just discussed to be unique in one particular; it alone states that the Holy Spirit aided Christ to offer himself on the cross. In taking leave of this passage we notice that it is most nearly unique in ascribing the new life in men to the

offering of Christ unto God. As in the case of bulls and goats, sprinkling with blood merely purges away defilement ; if the sacrifice of Christ does more, if it releases from dead works, that is, legalistic obedience, unto real service of the living God, we must ascribe this manward efficiency to the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit the sacrifice was offered to God, by the Spirit it is made effectual in us. But this is a result more familiarly traced to the life of Christ than to his death, and to his life as it began in his triumph over death.

#### (4) In Victory

His resurrection was his victory. Who gave Christ this victory? By whom was he raised from the dead? Any sufficient answer to this question will once more illustrate the New Testament's characteristic view of the tie between Father, Son, and Spirit. So evidently does it regard them as having a relative distinctness with essential identity, a functional independence with causal oneness, that we need not wonder at the grasp laid on Christian faith by the able but awkward attempts of theology to philosophize the whole matter. The resurrection of our Lord is the strong tower of Christianity. The sense of power, which it has imparted from the beginning, prevails over all corruptions in life, all defections in doctrine, all inroads of skepticism. While faith in the resurrection abides, Christianity is secure against internal disorder and external attack. And faith in the resurrection is virtually belief in the Trinity.

In seven or eight cases the resurrection of our Lord is spoken of as a fact, but not referred to its origin. This is what might be looked for wherever attention is

centered on the occurrence. It is found in predictions (Luke 9 : 22 ; Acts 26 : 23), in references to what followed (Rom. 4 : 25 ; 6 : 9), or to what depended on the resurrection as matter of fact (1 Cor. 15 : 16, 17 ; 2 Tim. 2 : 8). Once it is represented as in itself inevitable. It was not possible, said Peter, that Christ should be holden of death (Acts 2 : 24). The interest of this statement is not lessened, it is rather increased by the fact that the passage is one of those which refer the resurrection directly to God. For this shows how that which Christ in the nature of the case was bound to accomplish was actually brought about by the co-action and leading of the Father. There are some twenty-five texts which make God the agent. This is indeed the ordinary representation. It grounds our ultimate hopes on the ultimate reality. In two curiously contrasted verses Paul ascribes the resurrection of Christ to God as Father. In a winsome figurative reference to baptism he writes that, if we have escaped from death and are to walk in the glory of a new life, it will be as Christ also was "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6 : 4). Or if, stern against the effrontery of a false gospel, and rigid with the authority of his heaven-sent message, Paul would cite for his apostolate a source to which every believer must bow, it will be, full-phrased and full-panoplied, "Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (Gal. 1 : 1).

Twice the Master openly announced that he would raise himself from the dead. The earlier instance was memorable and was cited against him at his trial. It was at the first Passover of his public life. He had scourged the traders from the temple and gave a sign

of his authority, that if they destroyed this temple he would raise it again in three days. Often and often the New Testament claims for Father or for Spirit a part in what Christ does; this time Christ for once claims as his own act that which Spirit and Father do (John 2 : 19). The second announcement was also by anticipation. When Christ was in point of fact put to death, men did it and took the whole responsibility. It would have been a thing for derision if he had said then and there "I lay down my life of myself; no man taketh it from me." Precisely so when he rose, the Father's agency, and even the share of the angels was too obvious to make it the fit time for any reference to our Lord's own power over death. But in that culminating period, when the catastrophe rapidly drew near, then Christ might well be careful to show how little he could be taken by surprise (John 13 : 19), and how all which was to befall him belonged to his mission. "I have authority," said he, "to lay down my life, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment I received from my Father" (John 10 : 18).

What share in the resurrection is assigned to the Holy Spirit? On every account it must be kept in view that the Spirit of God is the energy of God going forth to do his will. This meaning, thoroughly established in the elder Scriptures, is in no way brought into question by ascribing personality to the Spirit. The teaching of the Master did not tend to disparage the Spirit but greatly to exalt him. The New Testament's account of the Spirit's offices but gives definiteness and enlargement to our view of them. This consideration of itself warrants ascribing the resurrection of Christ

to the Spirit of God. The Spirit does whatever the power of God does, for the *Holy Spirit* is *the power of the Highest*.

But there are a few passages concerning the resurrection in which this always underlying idea comes to light. "According to the flesh," said Paul, "Christ was made of the seed of David; according to the spirit of holiness he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1 : 3, 4). The resurrection was a powerful argument for the divine Sonship of Christ. It was an argument afforded by the Spirit. It was afforded by the Spirit when the Spirit achieved the resurrection. This would seem to be an exposition of that weighty, many-claused, singular, Pauline sentence, at once free from arbitrariness and logically coherent. If the explanation is *too* intelligible, that may bring it into doubt.

The entirely explicit teaching of Paul is that those in whom the Spirit dwells are to be raised by that indwelling Spirit (Rom. 8 : 11). So much is clear. The inference is easy, that the sun which is to mature the harvest is the same that ripened the first fruit (1 Cor. 15 : 20). When we are quickened together with Christ is it in reply to another voice?

The office of the Holy Spirit in raising our Lord throws a clear and gentle light over the too little considered problem as to what the resurrection accomplished. We are given to regarding it as a prodigious miracle, providing for whatever a marvel in the physical sphere can provide, only in supereminent degree. The part which the Holy Spirit took in this central event of



all history does not deduct aught from the familiar claims for the resurrection, but it turns our attention to more spiritual issues.

The rising of our Lord, with not even a prophet's voice or touch to draw back his spirit from the kingdom of the dead, to those who believe it occurred is the most stupendous event in history. When its results are considered it is seen to be the most momentous of events. The mere belief that it took place has high importance. But when we find the Spirit of God restoring the Lord to life, we discern that there and then God afforded the completest and most satisfying evidence of his own existence. All other proofs have to be pondered and in a manner proved; but if the resurrection of Christ by the Spirit of God is accepted, there the existence of God is demonstrated, for there the glory of his presence is seen.

God becomes even a tangible reality. That longing for an appreciable god which finds expression in idolatry is fully met when the reanimation of Christ by the Spirit proves that in knowing the Son we know the Father. John, the most spiritual of the apostles, opens his first Epistle by showing how much he that once lay on Jesus' breast valued the testimony of the senses, and he closes this Epistle by declaring that in Jesus Christ we know the true God and eternal life (1 John 1 : 1 ; 5 : 20).

But the resurrection, by which God was brought within reach of men's senses, when it was finished in the ascension also removed God beyond the profaning touch of sense. And so the resurrection saved the spirituality of Christian thought from heathenish debasement while supplying to it the invaluable liveliness



and certitude of a physical experience. Every advantage was won, every disadvantage avoided.

By the embodied revelation of the Most High the Spirit has distinctly transformed human ideas about God's highest moral attributes, holiness and love. To ancient Israel holiness was aloofness. God was to be worshiped only at a distance. The holy mountain, when God visited it, must not be touched by man or beast. The restrictions that ruled in the temple worship not only set up a priestly caste in Israel, but made the whole nation a religious aristocracy—the only thoroughly bad aristocracy. But the Hebrew idea of holiness was repudiated by God himself when the veil of the temple was rent in twain. The risen Christ has now entered the holiest place and left the curtain wide open behind him. The Holy Spirit could not do for religious ideas a more revolutionary act than in raising Christ. Holiness is now seen to be a moral quality. Christ came near, God is near, and holiness is no longer aloofness.

The love of God is similarly transformed. Under the ancient dispensation it was a self-recollecting love. Like family affection it was narrowed to one's own and was jealous over the constancy of one's own. The love which for Israel's sake discriminated against the Gentiles, now that the resurrection of Christ has put an end to all ritual distinctions, finds in love for the Gentiles the consummation and even the aim of love for Israel. The relations of God's love to his holiness peculiarly illustrate its newness. In both dispensations holiness required and love desired expiation for sin. But in the elder time the sinner must provide the offering; in the

new time love provides it for the sinner (Rom. 5 : 8 ; 1 John 4 : 10).

How the Holy Spirit crowns the work of Christ in raising him from the dead remains as yet far too little studied. Who has ever penetrated that saying, "I lay down my life that I may take it again"? (John 10 : 17.) We are assured, but have hardly learned to think of it so, that Jesus "rose for our justification" (Rom. 4 : 25). Paul even goes so far as to say of release from condemnation, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again" (Rom. 8 : 34). We can feel, if not quite comprehend, that if the Spirit of life had allowed our Saviour to remain the victim of death the cross could have been only a condemnation to sinners who inflicted it.

But if Christ rose we are risen with him (Eph. 2 : 6 ; Col. 3 : 1 ; 1 Peter 1 : 3). And it is peculiarly the work of the Holy Spirit to make us live, as it made him live. We well know that much ; what we have not laid hold of is how the Spirit's work is one. Our living is surely bound up with his life.

The life begun in the Spirit of life is consummated through the indwelling of the risen Christ. "Our life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3 : 3). Christian thought cannot go farther than this. The completeness of such a relation is all that we may hope for. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3 : 4). That glorious condition includes a change of "the body of our humiliation into likeness to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3 : 21). And it will be because "he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken our mortal bodies by

his Spirit that dwelleth in us " (Rom. 8 : 11). *Wholeness, holiness, happiness*—these shall be ours when the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8 : 9), gives us in full the fruit of what he has wrought through the labors, the passion, and the triumph of him who is our Teacher, our Redeemer, our Lord, and our Life.

## CHAPTER X

### CHRIST VINDICATED

#### 1. Then

**W**ITH the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the dispensation of ceremonies came to an end ; but the dispensation of the Spirit did not at once begin. The apostles were to become witnesses for Christ to the ends of the earth ; but not quite yet. The Master's own instructions were that they must wait until the Holy Spirit had given them power (Acts 1 : 4-8).

#### (1) The Need

Whatever mysterious accession of power over other men's minds might be conferred by the Spirit's promised baptism, such a power was the least of their needs, and a present lack of it the slightest of their disqualifications. The supreme requirement was some available attestation of the claims of Christ. Early in his ministry, when the Jews demanded a sign for his right to purge the temple, Jesus had chosen and promised the best possible sign, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2 : 19). No one had ever raised himself from the dead. None but the Son of God ever could. This sign had now been given. The apostles knew that he had risen from the dead, they had seen him go back to the skies, they were certain who he was. But who else knew what they knew or could be convinced by anything which they might say? The

last thing that the people were aware of about Jesus was that he had been put to death at their demand. Their accepted and legitimate guides had incited them to make the demand, and the Roman authority, under protest, had yielded to it. The populace with the rulers had decided against Jesus, and the case was closed. How get it reopened? While this state of facts lasted there was nothing for the Master's witnesses to do or to say. A rumor was abroad that they had violated his sepulchre and attempted a disgusting fraud. It is clear that a premature claim would worse than fail; its failure would lay a new stumbling-block in the way of faith.

Humbler pretensions, to be sure, might have won adherents. Much could be said for the Lord's teachings, virtues, wonderful works. Himself he could not save, but all the world knew that others he had saved. Some would willingly remember it, some, one may suppose, of the many he had healed. The Arimathean, who had a new tomb for him, and Nicodemus who brought spices for his burial, were like others, no doubt, who had loved the young Teacher, and now were greatly cast down and bewildered by his cruel fate. Sympathy with their disappointed hopes might perhaps have quietly spread for a while, but to what purpose? The cause was lost; grieving could not regain it. Was he a martyr? Why, yes; but the Messiah? Clearly, no. A prophet? Without question a prophet; but the very Son of God? Oh, what profanation so to name him now! If, then, there were any to whom he had shown himself alive after his passion, let them on no account make haste to tell of it. It was a secret to be hidden in the heart for a while, like that which Mary knew of the

mysterious beginning. Let them wait for "the promise of the Father," for they shall receive power and be "baptized with the Holy Ghost"—whatever that may be—"not many days hence" (Acts 1 : 3-5). It is not long to wait, only ten days more from Ascension Thursday.

## (2) Pentecost

The great day, the day of harvest, the day of Pentecost, now fully come, was undoubtedly the day from which all formal Christian beginnings are to be reckoned. One does not need to overestimate its importance in order to see this. Everything was in readiness, but nothing could be done. Christ had completed his mission; its results were secure; but his work was at a stand until a start should be made by the Spirit. It was a strange period, a period of complete arrest. Only a brief period, but long enough to show that Christianity from the outset was dependent on the Spirit of God, that the era of Christ is to be thoroughly identified with the era of the Holy Ghost. How strange the situation! Christ has sat down on his throne, but no one can say so. His apostles are to be his witnesses, but to what can they testify? They know the facts in large part, but who will believe a word they say? Christ has left them his work to do, and they cannot take it up. They have remained faithful against the world, and that has compacted them into a rudimentary church; but the church has yet to learn its function and to order its doings with effect. No wonder that extravagant claims are sometimes made for the day of Pentecost. Historically Pentecost, and not the first Christmas, was the beginning of the Christian era. From the birth of

Christ until the Spirit came all had been formative, transitional, fundamental indeed, and indispensable, but preparatory.

Still, if so great claims can be made for Pentecost, it is strictly as a matter of history, that is, as sheer matter of fact. This will prove to be claim enough. What took place on that day secured a part in history for all that had already taken place, and which otherwise would have remained outside the affairs of men. What the Holy Spirit then did gave effect to what Christ had already done. Indeed, what Christ had done was undone by his crucifixion; and what his resurrection and ascension did for his crucifixion remained manward a nullity until at Pentecost the Holy Spirit turned it into operative fact. Instead, then, of seeing that great day thick-clouded with mystery, instead of crediting occult relations between the Spirit and the infant church with an inexplicable efficiency, we see above all else a bald, matter-of-fact event giving the effect of reality to all which had gone before it. Christian history, if one pleases church history, began there, then, and thus.

Now, in claiming for Pentecost first of all a strictly historic value, let it be borne in mind that the facts of Pentecost were instructive facts. If the general office of the Holy Spirit is to minister the truth, here is the grand opening of that service. All along we have found the Spirit busied with revealing or applying the truth; but we have never witnessed any such revelation or any such application of truth as this. Christ said he was himself the Truth; but the Holy Spirit at Pentecost revealed Christ. Here first was he fully revealed. Every partial revelation which the Master had made of



himself seems to have confounded as many followers as it enlightened. Above all, the crucifixion, which later proved to be the most complete, most amazing and transforming revelation of God, was only stupefying to those who knew Christ intimately and loved him well. Let us not wonder at this. We do not know how long they were in finding out that the cross was more than an outrage. Perhaps Paul was the first to see this, as he was certainly foremost in teaching it. The partial self-revelations of Jesus operated as occultations. For many minds they hid more than they showed. But the ultimate and complete revelation of Christ by the Spirit carried all before it. So much came to light that everything else could be believed. It began so, and so continues. Christ disappears when belittled, he is visible to all the world when magnified.

#### **a. The Attestation**

The revelation of that day began where revelation was most important ; to wit, with vindicating the claims of Jesus. He stood condemned, he must be justified. He had been executed as a sinner, it must be shown that the sin was in executing him. And his righteousness is not all that must be brought to light. Men must be made to see who and what he is. It ought to be easy for us to recognize that, whatever else Pentecost accomplished, this was far and away what it most needed to effect. Everything turned on this. And now if we will look at the story of Pentecost in the Acts we will find that it is taken up with just this, the vindication of Christ's person, character, and claims. When the gift of the Spirit was referred to in advance,

it was often spoken of as a gift to believers. It was to be their baptism. It was to confer power on them. But when the day of Pentecost was fully come this view of the matter was utterly lost in another. The Spirit's descent was now regarded as a promise which Christ himself had received from the Father (Acts 2 : 33).

Note what Peter said about it. The disciples, speaking with tongues, were not, as he explained, frenzied with wine at that early hour in the day. They were prophets all, as Joel had predicted they should be. And this was why: Jesus of Nazareth, after he had been divinely attested by wonders and signs, as they very well knew, God had deliberately turned over to the people. And their wicked hands had seized and slain him. But God would not leave it so. He had raised Jesus from the dead. Of this all his followers here present were witnesses. Further, God had taken his Son to his own right hand. And now he sends the Spirit to prove all this. "The very Jesus whom you crucified," said Peter, "God has made both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2 : 14-36).

The Spirit's testimony was irresistible. The charge against the populace was overwhelming. They repented, and were baptized for remission of sins—all told about three thousand souls. The resurrection guaranteed the divinity of Christ; the Spirit of Pentecost now published the resurrection. No completer evidence can be imagined, no other kind of evidence could be so fit.

#### **b. The Alternative**

Still, many a Christian man has half wished that the risen Christ had shown himself to the world. How

irresistible would have been the testimony of worldly people who could not deny the evidence of their senses ! In this case we might actually have what now is only pretended, an official report by Pilate of both the crucifixion and the resurrection. Might not even melancholy and savage Tiberius, in his imperial retreat at Capri, have been impressed, and his dissolute people have yielded to testimony so multitudinous and compelling ? It would seem as though what some expect from the second coming of Christ must have come to pass at his going, and the history of mankind have been a redoubled millennium to this day. If only Christ had but shown himself to the world alive after his crucifixion !

But the very results to be looked for would have proved how unwise it was for the risen Christ to expose himself to the eyes of all men. The new creation could not come in that way. The new birth of souls is not to be achieved by eyesight. A well managed exhibition of himself might have won for the Lord Jesus a kingdom of this world ; but he would have none of it. It would have been the very kingdom which Satan had offered. Christ must reign in people's hearts. His rule could be effected only by the Holy Spirit, and on men one by one.

Furthermore, it is by no means certain that the fullest ocular evidence would have persuaded his enemies. It proved to be enough for Thomas, who had said that he would require the evidence of touch also ; but as to the adversaries of Jesus, up to the eve of his betrayal, it was written that, "though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him."

And so strange did this seem to the evangelist that he could account for it only as a blindness of eye and a hardness of heart with which God himself had afflicted the people (John 12 : 37-40). In the parable of Dives and Lazarus Jesus said that those who would not "hear Moses and the prophets, would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16 : 31). We should not forget how it was when that other Lazarus rose. No one could deny that he had been dead and was alive. Many flocked to Bethany to see him (John 12 : 9); but the council was embittered, and more than ever bent on destroying Jesus (John 11 : 46-53).

We are not left to conjecture. What effect did the Lord's resurrection actually produce on those who were set against him? They knew that he had risen. For this fact they had pagan witnesses, witnesses unbiassed enough. Roman soldiers reported the resurrection of Christ to the chief priests; but did the priests yield the case? Did they accept the evidence that heaven was on the side of Jesus? We know to what lengths desperation led them. They were not only ready to deny the fact, but bribed the soldiers to give out a false report. And this report was kept alive among the Jews to the not so early date when Matthew's narrative was written. Probably Saul of Tarsus heard that the Roman guard fell asleep, and that the disciples of Jesus ventured to rifle his tomb. And he was the hotter against them for such an atrocity.

If that tomb had not been empty, beyond dispute empty, there could have been no question of a resurrection, and there would have been no Christian church. The fraudulent pretense of fraud long ago died out;

but skepticism has since then invented every imaginable way of accounting for the empty tomb. All these evasions are alike futile. Each in turn was invented because free thinkers saw the futility of its predecessors. But obdurate enemies will on no account admit that Jesus rose. They cannot now, and could not then, be the source of faith to the doubtful. If an enemy like Saul of Tarsus was convinced by seeing the Lord, he ceased to be an enemy, and every such case would count only as Saul's does. In brief, if some had been convinced, others would have caviled; and the direct testimony to the future would have been exactly what it is, that of Christ's disciples.

### c. The Culmination

But testimony enough to prove the resurrection would not be enough to establish the claims made for Christ. If he had resumed his body only to begin another career on earth, he could not be the Son of God, the Saviour of men, or the first fruits of them that slept. He must return to heaven. The resurrection needed to be completed in the ascension. The forty days between these events were transitional, and seem to have covered a suspended process. This period was needed to make the disciples sure that their Lord had risen. It was needed also to lead the disciples' thoughts from what had been toward what was to be. But the most important function of the forty days was to satisfy the disciples that he with whom they had walked for three years was the very one who was about to go in a human body to his seat at the right hand of God.

Those who saw the Lord carried up into heaven

would be satisfied ; but how satisfy any one else ? It is not easy to imagine conditions which would justify accepting the unsupported testimony of the immediate followers of Jesus. An event supernatural as the ascension must be supernaturally corroborated. By so much as it is important to know that Jesus was all that we believe he was, by so much is it important not to believe in any false Christ. One can hardly think Paul's denunciation too severe of "another gospel which is not another" (Gal. 1 : 6-9). The support which the Holy Spirit gave to the testimony of the disciples was suitable and convincing. It was proved that they were prophets of God. What they said came as a warranted message from the skies. No merely physical miracle, wrought in the name of Jesus, and such miracles afterward were not wanting, could at the outset take the place of the enduement of one hundred twenty disciples with the Holy Spirit.

### **(3) After Pentecost**

It seems that the witness of the Spirit at Pentecost was as convincing as it was suitable. Whether a little while later men were supernaturally qualified to speak in unknown tongues which were actually in use by alien races, is a question of interpretation with which we need not here be concerned ; but it is plain enough that the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the enthronement of Christ, testimony which was first given on the day of Pentecost, was from time to time in some form repeated throughout the apostolic period. When the council attempted by threats to put a stop to the apostles' testimony, the whole company of the disciples prayed that



they might be encouraged and helped by signs from heaven; and again the place was shaken, they were all once more filled with the Spirit, so that "with great power the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4 : 1-33). If Peter was to pass along the good news to Gentile Cornelius, while he was telling how Christ rose and was exalted the Holy Spirit fell on all that heard the word (Acts 10 : 34-45). Or, if emulation and even envy on account of spiritual gifts appeared among the Christians in Corinth, it had by this time become plain to Paul at least that, while the astonishing gift of tongues was for a sign to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14 : 22), the intelligible gift of prophecy was still more impressive to "one that believeth not, or one unlearned." But now that prophetic gift included other teaching than the facts as to Christ; for it discovered the heart's secrets, and so enforced a confession that God is among the Christians of a truth (ver. 24, 25).

Through the variety of charisms bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon believers in Corinth we approach the permanent offices of the Spirit, and must ask what the Spirit has done and still does for the vindication of the claims of Jesus during the ages since Pentecost.

## 2. Now

### (1) By Miracle?

The testimony of the Holy Spirit to our Lord throughout the apostolic period took a form which was needed at the first. But the vindication of Jesus did not require a perpetuation of that testimony. It really prohibited such testimony. Miracles were indispensable in the outset, but would have been detrimental ever



after. Support for the claims of Christ should correspond to the nature of his mission. Would miracles have met that requirement? If so, what kind of miracles? We must not forget that a miracle is an event in the physical sphere. What physical event, even the most benign, could imaginably establish a spiritual religion? So far from this, the more kindly the miracle, the more despiritualizing and mischievous in the long run. It is clear that mere wonders would have made Christianity a gazing-stock, and that by and by even wonders would grow stale. If the miracles were apparently useful, if they healed diseases and fed the hungry, this could have been continued only at terrible cost to society. Carelessness about the laws of health, and relaxation of industry would have had consequences in the one case disgusting, in the other demoralizing. Indeed no religion was ever offered to men so ruinous to decency and virtue as Christianity would be if it could be counted on to provide miraculous cures for wasted health, or unearned bread and fish for idlers.

## (2) Life

But what testimony to Christ could now be so fitting, so conclusive, as a continued manifestation of the "Spirit of Christ which is in us"? What other testimony could have any value if "the fruits of the Spirit" were wanting. Again I say, the real testimony to any religion must be germane to the nature of that religion. What could so correspond to the nature of Christianity, what so attest its source in God, as the known achievement of its proper objects. A spiritual religion must have spiritual evidences. Its basis in historical facts

must indeed have an historical attestation. *This* Christianity has in the historical proofs of the resurrection. But even these proofs would but produce bewilderment in any reasonable mind if the Christ did not accomplish the objects for which he rose. Our religion must show what it is by what it does. It is the Christian life which shows that Christ lives. All living Christians say for him what all the apostles said to the council, "We are his witnesses; and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5 : 32). "Him hath God exalted" is their cry (ver. 31). The Christian life proves only an exalted Christ. It goes for nothing as proof of a merely human Christ. Such a Christ could not do all, such a Christ is not testified to by all that Christ has done for Christians.

The present hour in particular needs and receives a vindication of Christ by the Holy Spirit. Such are the mental habit and the spiritual mood of our times that no marvel except a marvel in the spiritual sphere can gain serious attention. All claims for the scientific observation and estimate of occult phenomena, believed in though these phenomena are by hosts of good people, are regarded by almost all the leaders in modern knowledge with impatience and disdain, as the efforts of quacks and cheats after honor and emoluments. The Christian miracles are not scouted only because they are not looked upon as an integral part of Christianity, but as the innocent delusions of the first Christian age, recorded in books sacred in a way, but without authority. Destructive criticism of those sacred books is accepted as matter of course. But meanwhile, what is beyond comprehension of ordinary believers, the figure of Christ

looms large to these moderns, and his place as the spiritual leader of our race is more and more acknowledged. Christianity is seen to have a beneficent place in current history. How account for this place unless Christianity is true? The achievements of the faith, past and present, cannot be overlooked. Christ at least is a standing miracle. The more we now claim for him the more we find that he does for us. The less we claim the less he can do, and the less we can prove. A lofty faith produces lofty living, and lofty living justifies lofty faith. Thus the illuminating Spirit to-day of all days vindicates Christ.

Over against this fact is the startling consideration that an evil life on the part of a professed Christian distinctly disparages Christ. Every sin by a believer testifies faintly or loudly that Jesus is not the Son of God, has not risen from the dead, does not sit at the right hand of the Father, does not intercede for us, does not help us. There is no avoiding this hostile and hateful testimony by the sins of Christians. No wonder the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that he who "sins wilfully after he has received the knowledge of the truth, treads under foot the Son of God, and counts the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and does despite unto the Spirit of grace" (10 : 26-29; *cf.* 6 : 4-6). How could any other effect follow? What else could disprove the claims of Jesus except his own failure in the person of his own followers? No wonder Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John 14 : 21). No wonder Paul would not have us think of any other possibility than obedience.

“Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God” (Rom. 6 : 11).

But the thoroughly aroused author of the warning to Hebrew Christians adds at once, “We are persuaded better things of you” (6 : 9). And what if the time of supreme trial should come again? Is it not certain that the heroism of the martyr ages would be found in believers of this “materialized age”? Would not many who live delicately and try to find life amusing, when put to the test “endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ”? Might not some who are gentle as Timothy prove to be sturdy as Paul? And would not the great mass of those who accuse their own lives of repeating the offense of Peter’s lips and denying the Master be able also to say with Peter, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee”? As the case stands, then, the Spirit of God rules the lives of his children sufficiently to teach our generation more persuasively than any earlier generation has ever been taught, that Jesus “is the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And it is plain that the time can never come when the great lesson of Pentecost can be learned from any other than the Teacher of that day, to wit, from the Holy Spirit of God. That Holy Spirit then, now, and unto the end of the age vindicates the claims of Jesus.

## CHAPTER XI

### CHRIST INTERPRETED

**O**F the promises that the Holy Spirit would teach the disciples two are exceptionally important. "The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14 : 26). "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all the truth . . . and he will show you things to come" (John 16 : 13). Question at once arises as to the scope of the teaching and as to the persons to be taught. Let us ask what answer was intended for that day and for ours.

#### 1. Then

##### (1) The Teaching

Truth of the past was promised : the Holy Spirit should bring to mind what Jesus had said ; also truth of the future : the Spirit would foretell things to come. If the first of these promises may perhaps cover only such an awakening of memory as spiritual enlightenment and appreciation of relations would be able to provide, at least the second promise can scarcely be understood merely of foresight by the same means. It is undeniable that insight into realities—and truth is only a correct statement of realities—freshens the recollection of past events and sayings which are associated in idea. Almost as certainly insight into the present

affords a wide-minded recognition of the many possibilities of the future or even a sagacious anticipation of the turn which affairs will take. Is, then, all that Jesus promised something by way of enlightened reminiscence and forecast? Could so limited a teaching be regarded as the all-inclusive function of the Spirit of truth? Or, useful as this might be to us, was it all that the promised Guide would do for the earliest Christians? For them, and through them for us? If this were all, would it be quite true that the Messenger was to take of the things that Christ had received from the Father, to take of all that the Father had, and show them unto the disciples? (John 16 : 14, 15.)

Is insight through spiritual mindedness all there is of revelation? "He shall glorify me," said Christ. Of Christ's glory more must become known than his followers could gather from anything they had as yet been told by him, or from anything which they would ever guess about the future. "I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now." Therefore the Holy Spirit will by and by say them for Christ. "He will guide you into all the truth" (John 16 : 12, 13). It is evident that, in order to know how much Jesus included in his promise that the Spirit would quicken their memories and reveal future days, we must consider how much he meant by those widest terms, "all things" and "all the truth."

#### a. Limits

In the Bible, as in common speech, words expressive of unlimited extent must often be limited in application. Time, space, and number all rest under this liability.



It is illustrated in prose as well as in poetry, in doctrine and precept alike, by the Old Testament not more than by the New, above all in the language of the most important teachers, Jesus, John, and Paul. This deserves illustration. David sang, "The king . . . asked life of thee, and thou gavest him length of days *forever and ever*" (Ps. 21 : 4). The appendix to Mark tells us that, after the Lord's ascension, his apostles "went forth and preached *everywhere*" (Mark 16 : 20). Earlier in Mark we read that there went out to hear John the Baptist "*all* Judea and *all* the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (1 : 5). Matthew, after making for convenience a forced grouping of the ancestors of Joseph, by omitting names which the Old Testament record furnishes, does not hesitate to say, "So then *all* the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations ; and from David to the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations" ; and then adds a statement which we cannot test, but hardly credit, that from the captivity to Christ were just fourteen generations more (1 : 17).

Our Lord's own precepts and promises are so admirable because they do not attempt literalness. Who ought to obey without limit, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away"? (Matt. 5 : 42.) But who could state exactly what was meant without ruining the precept? Unless, indeed, it was intended only for Hebrews in the case of Hebrews, as originally prescribed in Deuteronomy (15 : 1-11). How robust must the faith be which accepts in full the pledge, "If ye ask anything in my name I will do it" (John 14 : 14). How robust, not to say how unthinking, the faith which sees no limit in



the intent of the pledge because none is in the words, after one has asked again and again in vain ! Take the sayings of an apostle, and who is there but a restorationist that does not feel a little constriction of the throat when he ingests Paul's compact assurance, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all be made alive" ? (1 Cor. 15 : 22.) How cruel is John to the devout perfectionist in declaring without hint of mental reservation, "If we say we have no sin . . . the truth is not in us" (1 John 1 : 8) ; and how much harder is he presently on every Christian except the perfectionist, when he plumply announces, "Whoever has been begotten of God does not commit sin . . . and he cannot sin because he has been begotten of God" (3 : 9).

Of all these passages there is not one which can be accepted without some degree of delimitation ; nor is there one which would not be spoiled by introducing the delimitation among its terms. We must recognize the Bible's way. It is the way especially of the greatest among writers of Scripture, if we may so speak, of the noblest messages from God to man, to make sweeping statements, expecting that men will be swift enough to mark all due metes and bounds, and slow enough to catch at the intended encouragement and uplift.

This lesson of reserve we must apply to the promise of guidance by the Holy Spirit into all the truth. It has been disastrously neglected by Romanism on the one hand, and by fanaticism on the other. The context too must be allowed to interpret the promise. In the familiar translation of the most comprehensive promise there is a needless infelicity, and even inaccuracy (John 16 : 13). Jesus did not pledge the Holy Spirit to guide

into "all truth," but into "all *the* truth." That is, into all the truth about himself, so far, at least, as this truth is germane to those relations between himself and them which he had in view. A witness in our courts of justice is not sworn to tell "all truth," nor allowed to, but to tell "the truth." This means truth about whatever is at issue. There is no reason why this proper and universal signification in terms should not apply to the Master's promise. There is every reason why we should not do either him or the Spirit of truth the injustice of finding in the promise a scope which no one who heard it would think of, and which these very terms would not mean on other lips.

#### **b. Teachings of Jesus**

Those, then, to whom the promise was given were to receive from the Holy Spirit an interpretation of the mission of Christ ; his mission was largely one of teaching, and the Spirit was to interpret his teachings. The Spirit would recall them for this purpose (John 14 : 26). How much more largely to their minds than to ours Christ figured as a teacher all four evangelists make plain. It is most in evidence with the two who most fully reported Christ. No one can forget how he closed the Sermon on the Mount, in the versions of both Matthew and Luke. To hear and to obey his teaching summed up all. The deep-seeing John steadily presses the fact that the words of Jesus are spirit and life (6 : 63). It even amounts to life eternal to know God and Christ (17 : 3). If he still had much to say which they could not yet bear (16 : 12); if at best he told in advance of what would come to him and to them, in order

that afterward they might believe in him, and not be taken by surprise at their own trials (13 : 19 ; 15 : 20 ; 16 : 4) ; this is why the Comforter would testify of him. In so testifying he would fit them also to bear witness (15 : 26, 27).

Can any one fancy that to interpret Christ was a narrowing office for the Spirit ? At least Christ himself gave no ground for such a fancy. All that the Father had was his. Therefore he said the Spirit should take of his and show it unto them (John 16 : 15). No one could come to the Father but by him (John 14 : 6). It was because, as he had just said, he was himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To know him was to know the Father ; and for the future they did indeed know the Father ; had even seen him (John 14 : 7). This could hardly seem true, and Philip promptly said so. To Philip the one satisfying benefaction would be a vision of God. He could not believe he had already enjoyed that inconceivable gift. This was because he had not really known his Lord. The Lord himself seemed surprised to be so ill known. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip ?" For Christ's intimate consciousness of identity, to see him was actually to see the Father : "And how sayest thou, shew us the Father ?" (Ver. 9.) This was John's own persistent view. As above noted (p. 154) God put himself within reach of men's senses when Christ came (1 John 1 : 1-3 ; 5 : 20). Paul too will have it that in Christ they found at home "the fulness of the God-head bodily" (Col. 2 : 9).

It was a compendious but a comprehensive knowledge

of God which might be attained in knowing Christ. What was that knowledge? All that the Father had belonged to Christ. What was that all? We call to mind the similar assurance of Paul in phrases as notably glowing as those of Jesus are notably calm. "All things are yours," he wrote to those poor-souled Corinthians who would claim just what could be got from Paul, or Apollos, or maybe Cephas, or who looked to Christ as merely the head of their clique. "Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, the present, the future, all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3 : 21-23).

If it were an interpretation of Paul that we wanted, it would be hard to find any limit which he was thinking of. God may claim Christ, and Christ us; but Christ's possession in us gives us a possession in him, in all that he has, and in all God has. Kinsfolk and friends belong to each other. So do Christ and disciples. Christ meant to share with his people those riches which he had laid aside in order to enrich the poor. Paul would have it that heaven and earth, what is and what is to be, and all God's foremost servants are at the service of all God's people, living or dying. The meaning is plain enough. The sorrowful reproach to the Corinthians is effective only by lifting those partisans into loyalty and largeness, only by opening to the eyes of the starvelings a vision of the feast.

Did Christ mean to offer any less? I think so. It is true that all the Father's possessions were at his disposal, and into that treasure the Comforter was freely to thrust a hand for largess to the near followers of Christ. But the limitation which may be found in Christ's view

at this point is the very striking introduction here of ministering the truth. "He shall receive of mine and shall *show it* unto you" (16 : 14). And this designation of the process as a showing or teaching Jesus tied by a "therefore" to the vast claim which immediately precedes : "All things that the Father hath are mine."

Again we ask, was the office of giving Christ a narrowing office for the Holy Spirit? Or was it narrowing to give us Christ only through interpreting God by him, and him by his mission? What adequacy had the truth as it is in Jesus to fulfill the unbounded promise of the Holy Spirit's office?

As we try to enter into the minds of the first believers this question is embarrassing to those of us who cannot accept our Master's averment, an averment far beyond any current conception of the matter, that it is "life eternal to know the only true God, and God's messenger Jesus as the Christ" (John 17 : 3). But all that Christianity then began achieving was through the instrumentality of that knowledge. The qualities of God himself were soon so differently apprehended that God was virtually to them a different Being. It is not unlikely that every quality which enlightened Christians learned to attribute to him would have been mentioned, would certainly have been assented to, by pre-Christian Jews. Yet God was hardly the same God to Pharisees and to Christians. The view of him embodied in Jesus and expounded by the Spirit of truth was not the view which men had carried about with them before Christ. And that which men are in the habit of thinking about God is all he is to them. What idea does the name of Deity suggest? Is he an Eye which never turns away?

Is he Love, and nothing more? Or is he only august Holiness? Let it be noted that the prevailing view of God is not the same, say, in a Puritan generation and in ours. No, nor is it the same to the same Christian in successive periods of his life. The Holy Spirit hardly had a more momentous office than to transform the regnant conception of God, to interpret Christ, and God by Christ. The understanding of the Son of Man had, either by adequacy or deficiency, to stand for what God is. This view of God was one of "the things of Christ," and this thing of Christ the Holy Spirit took and showed unto the disciples.

Christ was himself the choicest gift of God. The Spirit offered Christ to faith. How astounding this revelation was when the Holy Spirit for the first time distinctly made it, the story of Pentecost amply testifies. It could never become commonplace to those with whom the knowledge of Christ was not, as it is with us, a birthright. Even now well instructed persons sometimes lay hold of the idea of Christ with astonishment. That idea perhaps invariably, surely with few exceptions, is now associated with the idea of his mission. It must have been so then, for all the apostolic preaching of which there is record was a proclamation of Christ crucified, or risen, of Christ effecting a vital something, and offering what he had effected, or was still carrying into effect. He had come on a mission, and for the sake of his mission. It is fitting that by his mission he should be judged.

#### **c. Redemption by Christ**

And so the Holy Spirit in interpreting Christ made known the mission of Christ. There was pressing need



that he should. Only the Spirit of God could succeed in that task. Apparently the Jewish mind had to unlearn much that Jehovah had long been at pains to teach, and which it had but painfully learned. We know, for one thing, the revulsion of sound Jewish hearts against human sacrifices. "The pleasant valley Hinnom" was Tophet now,

And black Gehenna call'd, the type of hell.

Their fathers in the bad old times had there offered their children in a now abominated sacrifice to Moloch; and not far away their own evil hands but newly made of the Son of Man what was said to be an acceptable offering unto God. Could Jews be brought to believe it? At first some, but in the end not many. Judaism prepared for Christianity, but prepared also for its rejection.

Yet meanwhile the propitiatory sacrifice had been vindicated. There was even a marked preparation for it on the part of those who were closest to Jesus. We know that they would not endure, even from his own lips, the monstrous requirement of his death. No statement of its purpose and importance shook their conviction that it must not be. They had so different ideas as to his mission. They loved him and honored him so greatly. They believed in him too highly to believe what he said. But the Holy Spirit was to recall, when all was over, what Jesus had taught; and Jesus himself was once more to rehearse for the Spirit's interpreting what the prophets had foretold, how that "Christ ought to have suffered and to enter into his glory" (Luke 24 : 26). The resurrection may have put a new face on the matter; it was certain to transform



their views. It made them think so much more highly of their Lord than they ever had, that ere long they could be persuaded by the Holy Spirit to accord the highest value not only to what he had done, but above all to what he had borne. Thus the cross became the paradoxical symbol of his triumph. Paul uttered the sentiment of Christian hearts about it with precision as well as ardor in his "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

If the Holy Spirit could make the disciples understand the adequacy of the cross as a sacrifice for sins, it could more readily teach its power to destroy sin. How naturally Paul passed from glorying in the cross of Christ to his next words, "by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6 : 14).

Sometimes the provision for pardon has been taken for immunity in sinning. Propitiation has threatened to become immoral. It was an early suggestion, "May we not continue in sin that grace may abound"? But Paul saw at once that this would defeat the mission of Christ. How seek pardon for sin, and remain given over to it? "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein"? (Rom. 6 : 1, 2.) To be relieved of sin's penalties is to be rid of its power, because the power of sin is one of its penalties. It is of all penalties the worst, except the reaction of a holy God against sin. God could not pardon, that is, relieve from the claims of a broken law, and leave us breaking the law. Still less could he forgive, that is, himself accept sinners as though they had not sinned, while abandoning them to a life of sin. Sin is death ; we cannot live in it.

**d. Life in Christ**

And so the Spirit uncovers to view another surpassing fruit of Christ's mission ; he not only delivers from penalties and from sin, he becomes himself our life. This truth belongs to the maturest period of New Testament thought. Brief as was the age which produced the New Testament, the steadiness and speed with which its doctrine unfolded is not its least extraordinary feature, especially when contrasted with the centuries afterward required to win full recognition one by one for its most important doctrines. Life in Christ is pre-eminently the teaching of John. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5 : 12). "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son (ver. 11). John, however, never surpasses, I think never equals Paul in compact and powerful statement of the whole case. There are no other words like these : "I have been crucified with Christ ; and I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2 : 20). But Paul attains such comprehensiveness and force only by breaking away with characteristic boldness from all literalness. No literally true expression could approach this figurative expression in truthfulness. But it is an astounding figure. "My very soul," said he, "is slain, my personality destroyed, and only Christ now is where Paul was." The Spirit of God wrought effectually upon that mighty spirit, gave him utterance, and made Paul the interpreter of Christ to all the ages.

In noting that the Holy Spirit sets forth Christ as the source of spiritual life, we need not decide either for or against a mystical theory of life in Christ. But

it should not be overlooked that the Holy Spirit has left on record certain teachings which show what seem to be counter views to be not in all respects mutually exclusive. For example, it will not be denied that the New Testament ascribes to Christ the life of men (John 1 : 4) and the support of all things. "In him all things consist" (Col. 1 : 17 ; Heb. 1 : 3). If, then, the conservation of the universe is his act, is it extravagant to surmise that the scriptural expressions to abide in him, for him to abide in us (John 15 : 4), to have our life hid with Christ in God, to call Christ himself our life (Col. 3 : 3, 4), really do recognize in him the source and support of the process which we call Christian living, do own him as the fountain of the spiritual energy which it is natural and seemly to talk of as "vital," and all without regarding it as any addition to the substance of the soul, which is itself the seat and synonym of life? For him to keep all things in existence is not to add to their materials ; why should it be an addition to the spirit for him to keep spirituality alive?

On the other hand, when Paul writes "to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1 : 21), the meaning is not deepened by making the saying metaphysical. Such an interpretation breaks with the context. The meaning is really heightened when it is understood to be that the heart of Paul was so filled and his mind so absorbed with thoughts of Christ that Christ was all he cared for, all he busied himself with, all that life meant to him. To be with Christ would make dying gain, and yet to remain in the flesh would be to win the fruit of his labors. To go to Christ would be far better for him ; to remain with the Philippians would be better for them.

Therefore he knew that he was to stay and keep on with his work. In either case he would be living for Christ ; and so to Paul a life "bound up in Christ," as we say of a mother and her child, was a very plain and practical, not an occult or metaphysical thing.

#### **e. Universality of Christ**

It was through Paul mainly, although through Peter first, that the Holy Spirit revealed the sufficiency of Christ for the Gentiles. It was through Peter first, not first through Jesus himself. If one of us Gentiles, well persuaded that we are the people, and that the commonwealth of Israel is alien, seeks on the lips of Jesus some show of authority for this popular sentiment, something more serious than the unexpected will happen. He will find such a sentiment not only without warrant, but also rebuked and condemned. It is true that Jesus reminded the people in Nazareth how Elijah provided through the years of famine for a woman of Sidon only, and how Elisha, though there were many lepers in Israel, cleansed none "saving Naaman, the Syrian" (Luke 4 : 25, 26) ; but these acts did not make Elijah and Elisha prophets of the Gentiles, and were cited by Jesus only as rebukes to his own townsfolk. It is true that once he journeyed across the borders and released from a demon the daughter of a Syro-phœnician woman, but he began with harshly reminding her that the children's bread was not for her, and yielded to her wit what he might perhaps have withheld from her entreaty (Mark 7 : 24-29). When he sent out his apostles in pairs he forbade them to go into "the way of the Gentiles, or into any city of the

Samaritans. . . Go rather," said he, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10 : 5, 6). It is true that he himself sat down at Jacob's well to talk with a Samaritan woman, and gave two days to teaching the open-minded men of Sychar. It is true he told the woman that neither Gerizim nor Jerusalem was the place to worship God; but this was because no *place* is God's abode. He who is Spirit must be worshiped in spirit. Jesus could say no less. How much less does any one think he could have said? It is also true that before the last Passover certain proselytes, Greek in race, asked leave through Philip to speak with Jesus. How novel this request was, how uncertain its reception would be, is hinted by the fact that Philip felt he must first consult Andrew, and both carry the unprecedented message to Jesus. And what did Jesus? We do not know that he granted the request; we are not told that he rejected it. But it started such reflections and such utterances that the Father himself replied from heaven. And what had Jesus said that required a response from the skies? Had it any reference to the request of those Greeks? It may have been, no doubt was, in some way prompted by the fact of such a request; but, as on the mount of Transfiguration, what he spoke of was "his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." This it was which evoked the loud acknowledgment of the Father there and here (Luke 9 : 31-35; John 12 : 20-30). "This voice came," said he, "for your sakes," and then he added that, "if he be lifted up from the earth he would draw all men unto him." I think he meant that all classes of men, Gentiles as well as Jews, how much more surely Gentiles! would feel the persuasive power

of the crucified. On this saying at least we may rest as an assurance, though it was not an unequivocal affirmation, that the Saviour intended to redeem men unto God "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Still it was but scanty avowal which Jesus made of universality in his mission. More exclusively than perhaps any other feature of the gospel, this was a revelation by the Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit that notified both Peter and Cornelius of what otherwise Cornelius would not have claimed nor Peter accorded. It was the descent of the Spirit where these representatives of Jew and Gentile met, which satisfied the apostle of the Jews, and was afterward appealed to in order to persuade others, that the gospel was meant for the uncircumcised (Acts 10 and 11). That Saul's mission was to the Gentiles was a special revelation to good Ananias, who should tell Saul what he must do (Acts 9 : 6, 15). While the great apostle lived he gloried in his special "knowledge in the mystery of Christ, in other ages not known, but now revealed by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3 : 3-6). For us everything has turned on such an interpretation by the Holy Spirit of Christ and of his mission. Mark it, ye who cry, "Back to Christ."

It was, to be sure, an interpretation easy in itself to justify. Since Christ had fulfilled all types none remained which a Jew must observe or which it would harm a Gentile to omit. What Christ had done was, then, for the one as much as for the other. What truth Christ embodied no ceremonial restricted to a people ceremonially prepared. God was the God of all, and all



truth about God was truth for all. Justification could not be by law, could be by Christ, evidently was for all who would accept Christ. In Christ alone was spiritual life; nothing apart from Christ could give life, but nothing excluded from life in Christ. This is plain enough to-day, and was all well argued by Paul and Pauline men; but to Jewish Christians nothing less than the persuasions of the Spirit could vindicate God's own liberty to show grace to the uncircumcised.

## **(2) The Taught**

The promise of the Master was that the Holy Spirit should be a guide into all Christian truth. To whom was this promise given? What the answer to this question is is not all one to high church and low church. Such difference as they see in the answer is enough to make the difference in their churchmanship. Yet it is doubtful whether those very marked diversities of doctrine as to the church spring originally from different views of the church's teaching function. It is rather a disagreement about the nature of the church that causes the disagreement about the church's authority, or one about ordinances and officers which begets the discord as to the nature of the church. It does not fall to us to go back to what in point of fact is the beginning, but to consider what, independently of opinions about the church, should not be a particularly troublesome problem in exegesis.

### **a. Apostles**

We ought to agree that a promise may be claimed only by those to whom it is given, unless evidence can

be brought that others are intended ; that is, that other persons are constructively among the persons into whose hands the promise passed. None but apostles were present to hear this promise. Those eleven intimate associates and selected witnesses of Christ could beyond all question claim the guidance of the Holy Spirit into all the truth. Was their enjoyment of this guidance *ex officio* ? Must one have been an original apostle in order to claim it ? Or need one be a successor in office to an apostle ? Could an assemblage of all the apostles, or an ecumenical council of all bishops, or some chief apostle singly, or his successor, show that the force of the promise was limited to them or him ?

Absence of all but the eleven does not strike us as limiting the Eucharist to the eleven. Plainly the Lord's Supper was for all. Those times so understood it, and the utility of the observance has fixed that understanding in the hearts as in the habits of succeeding centuries. Directions and warnings with regard to the communion of course supply a distinctly scriptural authority for a custom which after all has its real support in its value to all. We can see that it was important to extend the use and privilege of the communion to more than those in whose presence it was instituted ; was it important to regard the promise of plenary guidance into truth, a promise given to the same persons on the same occasion, as extending beyond the apostles ? Any one who doubts it has with him the vast majority of Christians. Low churchmen and high agree that the apostles could and did claim an authority as teachers for which no one else was fitted by the Holy Spirit. But even this prevailing opinion is to be qualified.

**b. Prophets**

A prophet spoke for God. When an apostle taught with authority, his authority, apart from his face to face knowledge of Jesus and the resurrection, so far as it was due to instruction by the Holy Spirit was the authority of a prophet. And there were many prophets. On Pentecost all who spoke with tongues were prophets. The two gifts are not represented as at first distinct. At Antioch "there were in the church certain prophets and teachers" besides Barnabas and Saul, and to them "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13 : 1, 2). Prophets undertook also to regulate Paul's own proceedings, to stop him on his last journey toward Jerusalem (Acts 21 : 4, 10-12), whither he felt "bound in the Spirit" to go (Acts 20 : 22, 23).

**c. The Church**

We note that unqualified assent was not given to all which a real prophet might say. In the Corinthian church, when two or three prophets spoke, some other person must judge; precisely as, if any one would speak with tongues, he might only when some one was at hand to interpret (1 Cor. 14 : 27, 29). Prophets in plenty there might be, but it was not prophets alone whom the Spirit endued with discernment. In some things a plain man may bear comparison with a genius. Paul prayed that Ephesian Christians one and all might receive from the God of our Lord Jesus Christ "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in full knowledge of him" (Eph. 1 : 17). When it became a question whether Paul had extended unlawful liberty to the Gentiles, and

he thought it would be well to secure for his course an indorsement from the mother church in Jerusalem, it was the church and not merely the apostles and elders who heard the case discussed, and then announced what "seemed good to the Holy Ghost" (Acts 15 : 28). Always if there were abuses to correct or false beliefs to uproot, Paul argued the matter, as a modern preacher would to a modern congregation. Evidently he took for granted that no claim to intimate and exclusive knowledge which he might set up and confirm by wonders and signs would convince his disciples. Like a modern missionary, whose superior acquaintance with Christianity is conceded, something remained for him to do if he would persuade not only heathen that Christianity is true but converts that his doctrine was true Christianity. His "speech and preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit" (1 Cor. 2 : 4), a demonstration of which his hearers must judge. He disclaimed "dominion over their faith" (2 Cor. 1 : 24).

The Holy Spirit taught the entire church, chiefly through apostles, but taught every believer, especially every faithful believer. "We speak wisdom," wrote Paul, "to the perfect," that is, to the mature. Only "he that is spiritual judgeth all things"; but a spiritual man may claim to "have the mind of Christ," and so to "know the mind of the Lord" (1 Cor. 2 : 6, 16).

But no readiness in Paul to consult other apostles, to concede that insight into truth is possible to all believers, affects in the least his insistence on the independence and fullness of his own revelations, the depth and adequacy of his own knowledge. His terrific denunciation of any that pervert the gospel as he had preached

it, is well known. He could not restrain his indignation. It found voice in almost his first words to the Galatians. His own teaching he certified to be "by revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1 : 6-12). Little as he wished to lord it over the faith of Corinthians, he was ready to give them "a proof of Christ speaking in him" if they would have it (2 Cor. 13 : 3). His very disclaimer of authority to impose celibacy on virgins, or to forbid the marriage of widows (1 Cor. 7 : 25, 40), shows that without the disclaimer he would have been understood to speak authoritatively.

As to the persons in that age who were contemplated by the promise of the Holy Spirit's guidance into knowledge of divine things, we conclude that apostles were purposed beneficiaries in the highest degree; that prophets received the same guidance to a degree which cannot be exactly determined; and that, as to comprehension of truth, which is real possession of it, apostles, prophets, and laity were helped on the same terms. To be spiritually minded was to secure illumination and insight, and to "walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" was to be spiritually minded.

A gift which we may share with an apostle, and which he could share on no other terms than are offered to us, might seem more of a distinction for us than for him. Yet illumination of known truth is of the last importance. To see into a truth is to be prepared to see out from it, to discern its relations and applications, to apprehend, in a word, its real worth. A truth understood holds up a light for all our seeing. This is doctrinal wisdom, and it outdoes doctrinal knowledge. Stout

Peter, when Paul took him to task for inconsistency, may have been the foremost apostle of the twelve, but I doubt if he were not too "dull of comprehension" to be thoroughly aware that his course amounted to what Paul roundly denounced as *dissimulation* (Gal 2 : 11-18). How sterling an estimate of what the gospel involves Paul gave when he closed his account of this painful affair by saying, "I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died for naught" (ver. 21). Paul had the courage of his convictions; and this moral quality gave clarity, breadth, and fixity to conviction; while much to the degree that Peter wanted moral courage, his understanding was clouded. It is not to be supposed that he deliberately carried away Barnabas with what Paul calls "his dissembling," but it is clear that even an apostle could secure clairvoyant appreciation of truth only on the same terms as other Christians.

## 2. Now

The interpretation of Christ in our day is determined by three agencies—tradition, exegesis, and Christian consciousness. The church is not here mentioned as a fourth, because it is not a distinct agent. It would be if it had a voice which all recognized as official and authoritative. But as only the aggregate of Christian men, organized or unorganized, it is the church that rehearses the tradition, interprets the Bible, and is at once the subject and the voice of Christian consciousness. These three determinative agencies then must be considered in order to a proper estimate of the Holy Spirit as the interpreter of Christ to our generation.



It is only less important to-day than nineteen centuries ago that the Holy Spirit should perform this office. If less important now, this is because before the apostolic age came to a close an ample account of our Lord's career, mission, enthronement, and present relations to men was set down in black and white, once for all. No doubt an extreme risk is accepted for any unfolding system of ideas when it is embodied in set terms which may be weighed, which have been chosen by authorized persons, and which are submitted to all men.

Definitive statement is not, however, a disadvantage to truth. It is a safeguard against misconception and misrepresentation, the best safeguard. When the Book has passed unscathed through the fires of criticism, through fires lit afresh in every generation, but never able to destroy the sacred oracles, then they are attested, as a man's contention at law is attested after it has been adjudicated by every court which could be resorted to, and in every court has won a decision in its favor.

But the ancient gift of the sacred Scriptures leaves much for the Holy Spirit still to do by way of instructing the long procession of generations. Mankind is largely under the control of tradition; the Scriptures themselves need to be interpreted, and Christian experience is continually brought within the purview of Christian consciousness with all its irresistible persuasiveness and its formidable prepossessions.

### (1) Tradition

Tradition is in ill favor with Protestant Christians. The Master denounced it. And as the tradition of the

elders made void the law, so it seems to us that the tradition of Roman Catholicism has made void the gospel. Neither scribes nor Romanists meant any such mischief. Their traditions were intended in the one case as "a fence" to the law, to save the unwary from breaking its requirements, or, in the other case as an enrichment of the gospel. Pharisees held that Moses left with Joshua and Caleb much instruction which was not included in the books of Moses, and there is nothing improbable in this belief. Romanists hold that Paul told Timothy and Titus a deal which was not mentioned in his Epistles, as is likely enough, since each Epistle was for a special and limited purpose. But the traditions about what Paul or Moses said have undone much which each of them wrote.

Yet tradition is not without its uses. Some of these are recognized in the New Testament. Paul enjoined the Thessalonians, "Hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or our epistle," and "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh . . . not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 2 : 15 ; 3 : 6). There are some things which tradition can do. Tradition is a statement passed along by generation to generation. Ordinarily it goes from mouth to ear, but may be transmitted by writing, such as letters or other documents which are prepared not as permanent records but as casual means of communication.

Tradition is chronic rumor. If an occurrence is of importance enough to get talked about, the rumor is good evidence within limits that the occurrence has taken place. If the occurrence is of such moment that it cannot be forgotten, the report of it is perpetuated,

the rumor becomes a tradition. A few years ago a rumor was abroad in the land that there was war with Spain. Did any one doubt the rumor? It was said that unprecedented naval victories were won by our fleets in the tropical waters of both hemispheres. We were astounded, but we all believed at the time that the report was true. Those of us who so believed were in extremely few cases at hand to see for ourselves. We credited the reports which had got into the newspapers, or were talked over between persons. The rumor of that war persists. It is growing chronic. It bids fair to become a tradition. Already a tradition has grown out of the rumor of a civil war forty years ago, including the notable personages Lincoln and Lee, neither of whom many of us ever saw, but who, as tradition says and we on the strength of it believe, in their time cut the great figure still talked of. There is an inveterate tradition of a still earlier war, with its George III. and its George Washington, of both of whom tradition gave us the first credible account. It was not histories that made their names familiar in our youth. Presumably it was not history that first told us of Napoleon and Cromwell, and Julius Cæsar and Alexander, and Mohammed and Christ.

Tradition may be trusted to keep such names alive, and always with the names some notion of the persons. The notion about the person is the perpetuator of his name. Tradition gives us valid assurance that Jesus lived, that he had great power over his followers, was regarded by them as their Redeemer and Lord. And the tradition is constant. It is not a shifting tale. What it had to say concerning Jesus in the last genera-

tion we feel quite clear about, for it was clearly taught us by our parents. They in turn trusted their own teachers, and from them and their teachers came the same story in receding series back to the age that knew Jesus. That the tradition has been uniform may be easily ascertained from the record made of it in each generation until we reach the first, and of what the report then was, in which the Christian tradition began, the New Testament is the record. From the outset it has never changed.

Tradition cannot be trusted to do more than preserve substantially correct reports of a sufficiently great person or event. These reports it cannot let die and cannot easily falsify. But an elaborated set of abstractions, a scheme of religious doctrines or of minute precepts, tradition is quite certain to derange or even undo. It will surely persist in passing them on. It does so now and for us. It was not from the Bible that we found out what we know of Christian truth, nor from any other source than tradition. Parental instruction, Sunday-school teaching, to some lesser extent friendly indoctrination and counsel are the sources of our religious beliefs, and these are the customary forms of tradition. Preaching is the authorized voice of tradition. The sermon is its deliberate perpetuation. How momentous that the Holy Spirit keep the tradition pure! That it has done so for substance of doctrine we may feel assured, unless there is reason to believe that the earliest recorded as well as the latest uttered tradition, and all the voices that intervene through these nineteen Christian centuries have united to mistake the nature of Christ and of his mission to men.

At bottom the question as to the worth of Christian tradition is a question concerning the teaching function of the church. It is claimed that the church is a "fountain of authority" concerning Christian truth, and authority of the church is just as stoutly repudiated as claimed. At least one important factor may be cancelled out of this problem. We need not consider merely what the Holy Spirit enables the church to know and declare. The church may be regarded for the moment as purely human. We need not try even to distinguish the true from the false church, or the church at large from local churches. Meaning by the Christian church only that aggregate of associated men who nominally accept the religion of Christ, we may ask whether such an association has not the capability which belongs to every other human organization many generations old of knowing what it is for and what it agrees to believe? Does not the fraternity of Free Masons know something about why it exists? Could it not tell its secret if it would? Is there, or was there ever an enduring society that could not? Is it, then, credible that the Christian church cannot be appealed to for perfectly trustworthy information as to what Christianity is? If there are any points on which the church's tradition is unchanging, and we have seen that there are, these points are infallibly a part of the genuine Christian doctrine, or else that doctrine has always been mistaken by all Christians. How much this position is strengthened by the certainty that the Holy Spirit has dwelt in the hearts of true Christians will be more appropriately considered under the head of "Christian Consciousness"; but what has already been

said concerning the insight which spiritually minded men enjoy should make it clear to us how such men, instructed by the Spirit, have been able to interpret Christ truly to other Christians, and how by the power and persuasiveness of their insight they have kept alive a tradition sound in the main, though in details impossible to maintain in purity.

## (2) **Exegesis**

The Roman Church has not been at fault in insisting on the importance of an infallible interpretation of the Book. Protestants have often been mistaken in so jealously guarding "the right of private judgment" as to overlook the importance of right judgment. Let us insist that the Bible is infallible; yet its infallibility goes for nothing unless we infallibly know what the Bible means. It is the possibility of error at some point which leaves the truth uncertain. If the Bible is fallible we do not certainly know the truth of God; but we do not certainly know the truth if our interpretation is fallible. Infallibility of interpretation is practically as important as infallibility of the Book.

There are four possibilities: we may have a fallible interpretation of a fallible book, or an infallible interpretation of a fallible book; a fallible interpretation of an infallible book, or an infallible interpretation of an infallible book. In point of fact, we have all four. Great reverence has grown up in this country for the Constitution of the United States. We have learned to regard it with some of the awe which in other lands contemplates the divinity that "doth hedge a king." Yet neither king nor constitution is always wise or



right. That venerated instrument is a fallible book. And some interpretations of it are fallible. It has never been settled, nor ever will be, whether a strict or a liberal construction of our organic law is correct. It is the fundamental issue between parties, and the division is permanent. Courts can neither evade the issue nor decide it. But we have also infallible interpretations of the Constitution. We know infallibly that it provides for executive, legislative, and judicial departments of the central government. We would not be better assured as to this if it were written across the sky.

Let us say, then, that our Bible is an infallible book, and we disagree perhaps all the more tenaciously about its teaching on many points. So long as the disagreement continues it cannot be infallibly known which interpretation is correct. But we also have infallible interpretations of the infallible Book. We know absolutely that it represents God as personal and all-perfect; Jesus Christ as in some sense divine and in some way Saviour; the Holy Spirit as transformer and guide; faith, either directly in Christ or mediately through the church, as the condition of all the benefits offered by the gospel; and the future as seriously affected by the present. That these things are infallibly known to be the teaching of the Bible would not be better certified if the voice of God proclaimed it from heaven in the hearing of all men. Our infallibility is not due to the authority of ecclesiastics, nor to the conclusiveness of arguments. It is due to the impossibility of understanding the Bible otherwise. The right of private judgment becomes the authoritative voice of a universal consensus.

This consensus will be found to cover precisely the points which are steadily affirmed by tradition. And they are the essential points. Surely it ought to be so. If tradition fastens on the name, the characteristics, and the mission of Jesus Christ, it is because those characteristics and that mission are what make his name memorable. Now what else than this is it that the New Testament also ought to make plain about him? The tradition is uniform in support of precisely that which exegesis always finds in the Bible. If it were otherwise, then the Bible, which was given for the guidance of man, would be the most preposterous book ever written; for it would be a book which left the essentials of Christianity so uncertain that no one could find out from it what they are, and all who tried to would be contradicting each other.

It can hardly have escaped notice that the uniformity claimed for tradition and biblical exegesis concerning the fundamentals of faith is not here ascribed to the tutelage of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it has been studiously and scrupulously insisted on that Christ was too impressive and the Book too intelligible to leave human understanding at fault in the main. But the Spirit no doubt has helped to protect our inherited conceptions from being impaired by preference for any unchristian tradition, or for an alien exegesis. The congruity of Christian ideas is largely their protection, a congruity as much felt as seen. The office of the Spirit as the interpreter of Christ is thus most evident in connection with the teaching of Christian experience, which is the real issue when question arises about the authority of Christian consciousness.

### (3) Christian Consciousness

This is a means of interpreting Christ as to which a sweeping assertion hazards all, while disparagement, on the other hand, makes out the inner life of a believer to be a delusion. Schleiermacher's too exclusive claim for Christian consciousness was after all the most permanently vital and vitalizing element of his doctrine, or of any one's doctrine in the nineteenth century. It affords to Ritschl's scheme whatever worth there is in its "judgment of worth," and is the one positive, constructive, priceless contribution to present-day thought by that powerful critic and theologian. Let us begin by allowing ourselves to hope that we may find the testimony of Christian consciousness entirely defensible in nature, intelligible in utterance, and definable in scope. Such a hope is well worth proposing to ourselves in face of the contention by alarmed conservatives that no one can tell whose Christian consciousness is to be consulted, that it has no plain word to speak, and that nothing whatever in the way of Christian doctrine has been ascertainably agreed to by the consciousness of all Christians, throughout the whole course of the Christian centuries.

What is meant by the term must first be made plain. Meanings could be assigned which would expose the testimony of this witness to depressing doubt, even to entire rejection. But what is consciousness, except being aware that one thinks, feels, decides, acts, in a word, has an experience? What is Christian consciousness except being aware that one has a Christian experience? What is a Christian experience except our dealing with facts which Christianity appeals to or pro-

duces? That is, what the Bible declares for truth we experience as fact, and to call this Christian consciousness is merely a somewhat formal way of saying that we are awake to the situation. The evidence of consciousness, then, resolves into the evidence of experience.

It is evident that the Holy Spirit's office is indispensable to Christian consciousness. It is the Holy Spirit that lights up or even produces the fact of Christian experience. The testimony of Scripture to this effect is explicit and copious, and what Scripture alleges about the Holy Spirit's office, experience confirms. It would not answer to say that we perceive the Holy Spirit at work in us; but we discern his works in us. These are as certainly reaffirmed by experience as they are affirmed by Scripture. Have we conviction of sin? It is the office of the Holy Spirit to "convict the world of sin" (John 16 : 8). Have we been delivered from sin? "The requirement of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8 : 4). Is the new living due to new life? "The spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8 : 2). Can we feel sure that we are born of God? "The Spirit itself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8 : 16); and "in this we know that he abides in us, from the Spirit which he gave us" (1 John 3 : 24). Have we an inward assurance that Jesus is the Son of God? Does God in some unaccountable, almost weird and wholly masterful way convince us, and hold all the Christian centuries to the conviction, that the One we own as Lord may rightly be worshiped as divine? "There are three that testify, the Spirit, and the water, and the

blood. . . This is the testimony of God, that he has testified concerning his Son. He that believes on the Son has the testimony in himself," namely, "the testimony which God has testified concerning his Son. And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John 5 : 7-11). What is all this but John's reminiscence of the Master's own words, "He will glorify me"? (John 16 : 14.)

Without attempting to cross the wide field of Christian experience all the way in any direction, what has already been noticed reveals two classes of Christian truths, those which can be directly experienced, and others which can be indirectly proved from experience. Thus it is quite under our observation that we were alien from God and that now we are as his children; but it could not be the direct teaching of experience that there is life for us after death, that Jesus Christ ages ago rose from the dead, that he is now at the right hand of God, that he intercedes for us, that God is triune, that he is infinite in all excellences, or even that he exists. None the less Christian consciousness indirectly testifies to all these transcendent realities. It does this by the effects in us which may be ascribed to them, or by the effect in us of denying them. For example, the entire series of moral and spiritual changes that Christianity produces corresponds to the highest claims for Christ, and is produced no otherwise; while the denial, let us say, of the existence or perfections of the Deity affronts conscience, heart, and even æsthetic sensibility. When Clifford openly confessed that "the loss of theistic belief is a very painful loss" . . . that he had "seen the spring sun shine out of an empty

heaven to light up a soulless earth," and had "felt with utter loneliness that the Great Companion is dead";<sup>1</sup> or when the sons of Korah sang "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Ps. 84 : 2), the atheistical professor and the devout psalmist were alike citing us to a proof for the existence of God, little as the ancient singer suspected it and expressly as the modern scholar denied it. A true thought of God thus met the requirements of a criterion within us, and this sort of occurrence is the experience through which the fact of God's existence becomes certified.

Our higher powers are a manifold standard of the good and true in corresponding spheres. The matter stands thus: All the psychical powers of a rational being can exercise themselves upon God. It is their only full and satisfying employment. Without this employment our rational faculties experience yearnings and strivings which prove at once the dignity of man's nature, the largeness of his requirements, and his inability to provide for them. If a proposed doctrine in religion fails to satisfy these yearnings, so much the worse for that doctrine. It has been tested and found wanting. It has been tested by the chemistry of experience and has not stood the test. The test may be a bad one, or a good test ill applied. The discredited doctrine may in point of fact be true, but it cannot seem true. Or if it passes all experimental tests, it cannot seem false. It may for all this be a false doctrine. As in the opposite case the test may be a bad one, or a good one ill applied, but the doctrine that seems so to fit us cannot but seem true and desirable.

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<sup>1</sup> "Lectures and Essays," p. 389.



A doctrine about God which collides with reason, or which affronts the conscience or makes the Most High appear unworthy of worship or of love, may possibly be a true doctrine; and yet a blunder in the soul's chemism, a blunder made in the laboratory of the soul's experience renders it impossible to concede to that truth its rights. And the converse equally holds. How indispensable that Christian experience be controlled by the Holy Spirit! Like a blind man tapping his way through the streets with a stick, Christian experience follows its own guidance always, but the Spirit must make it expert.

It is exceedingly interesting and not a little useful, to test by the standard within us doctrines which seem remote from experimental knowledge. A spiritually minded man may do it well. "He that is spiritual judges all things." "God has revealed these things unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2 : 15, 10). Thus by setting truth up to the standard of the soul's requirements we gain a strong assurance that there is an all-perfect and Supreme Being. Christ too may in this way figure to our minds as what the New Testament would have us think he is. Indeed, the grander the figure of him the distincter and more veritable, that is, the more emphatic the attestation found within us. By such a test the Holy Spirit is credited with our transformation. Even the eternal life seems assured through the operation within us of "the power of the endless life." There is no doctrine of the Christian religion which is without its practical bearings. There is none which was announced for other reason than its practicality. And so one and all can be submitted, directly

or indirectly, to a trial by experience. It is the case even with doctrines which were made known to us only through special revelation.

Two important conclusions may now be reached as to the interpretation of Christ by the Spirit through Christian consciousness: First, since the standards found in our constitution are liable both to be perverted by sin and to be misunderstood, their inscriptions, so to speak, effaced or defaced or mistakenly deciphered, the Christian consciousness is not a trustworthy standard for the truth of doctrines which are in dispute. But if, on the other hand, its decisions on any point are uniform, Christians could not well imagine that they all have always erred as to what is the testimony of their experience, or have confided too much in its validity. This would be to refuse to self-knowledge the credit which, as we have seen, belongs to a consensus in tradition and in the interpretation of the Bible. Worse still would it be to say that those two processes of oral transmission and merely intellectual exposition have a trustworthiness which must be denied to the operations of the Holy Spirit on the soul, for the sake of which the Bible was given and the tradition kept alive. On points, then, as to which the correct reading of Christian experience is disputed, there is every reason for rejecting the inerrancy of that reading. But none the less Christian consciousness is the standard of our established convictions, and conviction is essential to the practical efficacy of a truth. The doctrines fully attested by experience may be fewer than those that stand acknowledged by a *Credo*; but they are our working

beliefs, and the only beliefs of ours which can claim this high rank.

The second conclusion is equally beyond dispute; the aid of the Holy Spirit is more important to Christian consciousness than anywhere else, if Christ is to be correctly interpreted. It is so here and now, just as it was formerly in the land of his birth. We are to bear in mind that, as the Bible never reveals speculative but always practical truth, its doctrines are a statement of truth found in the Christian consciousness of the ancient writer. That truth was revealed to him of the Spirit, comprehended by him through the Spirit, applied to him in the Spirit, and published by him under the Spirit's guidance. It is impossible to imagine how barren would have been the result if an apostle had not allowed the truth to enter into his life, and so enabled him to declare it as matter of personal knowledge; or, on the other hand, how disastrous would be the misinterpretation of Christ and perversion of Christianity if the Holy Spirit did not now inspire the thoughts and direct the inner lives and help the utterance of those who carry the gospel to mankind.

### Comparative Effects

In distinguishing the characteristic effects on the popular view of Christ which are traceable to tradition, to study of the Bible, and to Christian consciousness severally, we may light upon results not looked for, and which show how progress of doctrine is to be made. Which, for example, of these three that frame the general opinion is decidedly the least venturesome, the most conservative? Which but distrusted and decried tra-

dition? Which has been the most fruitful in whimsies that delight to break with tradition and take pride in announcing themselves as discoveries? Which can this be except an unhistorical, unscholarly exegesis of the Bible? And what other could it be than the Christian consciousness, which through sympathy with the religious spirit of the times insists in the name of progress on modifying doctrine to suit the times? Of course, the Bible is constantly appealed to in support of every extreme, almost as constantly as though it were the actual fountain of our opinions.

It is easy to see why tradition is conservative. Its only office is to conserve the lessons of the past. It tells what it has been told. If it adds anything it does not mean to. To change a little the message which it carries from one generation to another is merely its infirmity. Any messenger may make the same mistake. The telegraph often does it. Conservatism then inheres in the very nature of tradition, and is never wittingly departed from, unless as sometimes occurs, the message is deliberately altered by a generation that receives it. And this inherent conservatism where tradition prevails is made absolutely rigid by the reluctance and timidity of most people to change their religious belief.

As to the effect of biblical studies we are well aware that our sacred Scriptures announce doctrines which invite and receive profound investigation. The methods of investigation cannot be too carefully chosen, nor right methods too strictly followed. The matters to be dealt with not only transcend observation by the senses, but lie along and pass beyond the boundary of exploration by human reason. The Bible is largely a

record of mysteries, that is, of truths made known by revelation. But reason may variously test and attest the truths which it could in no wise discover. The temptation to a superficial student, especially to one who truly loves and constantly studies the Bible, is two-fold: First, he is tempted to draw inferences where the impossibility of comprehending a truth forbids the attempt; secondly, from the vastness of its themes, and from the wholly practical aims of the Bible it comes about that its single statements are incomplete, and for theoretical exposition insufficient; but incidental expressions are often caught at and made the authority for doctrinal fancies quite out of keeping with the positions of the scriptural writer quoted, and still more incongruous with the main teachings of the Book. It is in this way that innumerable fantastic heresies arise, odd little sects break away, and the newly invented incongruity is advocated with stubbornness of ignorance and exemplariness of zeal so long as the breath of life remains in it.

But, while the liability to such eccentricities is far from ended, a veritable science of hermeneutics is helping to correct this frequent cause of reproach against the Protestant liberty of interpretation, and against the Bible itself. But correction by transforming the method of interpretation must necessarily be slow. Yet, I think, no wide extension and inveterate persistence of petty errors need be feared; because there is no human need which is met by them. So far Christian experience is conservative; only less so than systematic theology, which reveals the incompatibility of a fancy with Christianity itself, or the history of doctrine, when it shows

that this supposed new fancy was long ago proposed, well weighed, and "found wanting."

Christian consciousness, then, is not to be accused of vagaries, fond as it is of progress. It may be said to its credit that the Christian sentiment of a generation is never captivated by an idle whim. It may be at fault, but its fault is not a trivial fault, for it does not deal with trivialities. If the Spirit of the Times calls for a modification of some notable doctrine, or even, as many now insist, for a general reconstruction of theology, this is invariably due to a need which is widely felt. It is Christian experience, experience of the requirements and the supplies of the inner life, which suggests new views, determines what new views can gain general attention, and what conclusions have a chance to be finally accepted. But it is the office of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all the truth by making known our needs, and the remedy. Interpreting us to ourselves, he can interpret Christ to us. Christian consciousness thus holds an historic relation to living truth, and the Holy Spirit holds a vital relation to Christian consciousness. Through conscious experience, and only through conscious experience, he fulfills the promise to lead us into all truth. In a word, while not the immediate criterion of truth, Christian consciousness is the working measure of the worth of truth.



## CHAPTER XII

### OFFICE TO THE WORLD

TWO widely different views are taken of the Holy Spirit's office to the unbelieving. One opinion occasionally found among Calvinists is that the Holy Spirit is never granted to the unregenerate, that it is a gift to the people of God only. Much the same view is presented less harshly in two forms. According to one of these the Holy Spirit addresses the ungodly, but only as he speaks through Christian lives or language. Another opinion defines the process, explaining that the Spirit of God is carried to the worldly by the words of Scripture, precisely as the spirit of a man may be spoken of as imparted by what he says to another. In opposition to all these is the teaching with which revivalists have made us familiar, that the Holy Spirit is ever calling the unconverted by external appeals from the preacher, the Bible, divine providence, and also by inward and manifold persuasions. The anti-Calvinist theology has carefully elaborated this preacher-view into the tenet that, in consequence of Christ's atoning work, the Holy Spirit is given to all men, and by "common grace" so far corrects the consequences of the fall that every man has "gracious ability" to accept or reject the salvation offered in Christ.

These opposite extremes of opinion have to face the embarrassment that there is no Scripture for either of them. It is a fatal want, since the Bible alone is an

original fountain of information on this subject. However extraordinary the transactions occurring in our own breasts, however momentous the changes observed in the conduct of other men, it would be fanaticism of an audacious type to refer these inner or outer occurrences to the Spirit of God, if we had no warrant of Scripture for so doing. No psychological test indicates that men are not naturally capable of all these changes in feeling and in life. Now there are only two passages in the New Testament which declare that the Holy Spirit acts on the souls of unbelievers. But there are two; and this fact refutes the doctrine in all its forms that the Holy Spirit does not visit the unregenerate. Yet neither of these two texts in the least intimates that the Holy Spirit's visit to the wicked is a fruit of the atonement; and neither states that the Spirit confers "common grace," whereby all men are enabled to accept or reject the gospel at will. That is, neither passage teaches that all men are half-regenerated.

In considering these two texts addressed to the people of a distant day, it is unnecessary to distinguish what the Holy Spirit did then from what he does now. The simpler text is the biting reproach of Stephen to the council: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers, so ye" (Acts 7 : 51). No wonder, hearing this, "they were cut to the heart, gnashed on him with their teeth," and when he added that he "saw the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," cried out, stopped their ears, ran upon him with one accord, cast him out of the city, and stoned him. That Stephen said being "full of the

Holy Spirit," and this they did resisting the Spirit. It is plain that the Spirit addressed itself to them outwardly, perhaps inwardly; but there is no word, nor any sign in them, of a special and gracious ability, Spirit-given, to accept the Good News.

The other text has received many interpretations. This passage is the Master's own prediction of the Holy Spirit's office to the world. "When he is come he will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. In respect of sin, because they believe not in me; and of righteousness because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no longer; and of judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged" (John 16 : 8-11).

Some of these terms are characteristic of John, if not quite exclusively his; and nearly all are used characteristically. It is neglect of this fact which has led to so many unwarrantable explanations. The clue to the entire passage is that the offices for the world here ascribed to the Holy Spirit, one and all turn on relations of the world, directly or indirectly, to Jesus Christ. The fruit of the Spirit's activity in this relation of Christ to the world is that *a new view* is to be imparted. The convicting will not be *of* sin, righteousness, and judgment, but *in respect of* these; that is, it will be a conviction, to translate literally and correctly, *about* sin and the rest. This new view will correct a blameworthy error. The world shall be not only convinced but convicted.<sup>1</sup> *Conviction* means both a strong persuasion of truth and a lively persuasion of guilt. Both meanings are present in this instance.

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<sup>1</sup> See valuable discussion in Hare's "Mission of the Comforter," note L.

### 1. Conviction of Sin

“He shall convict the world of sin.” Conviction of sin popularly means conviction of personal sinfulness. That meaning is not absent in the present case, but is not foremost. There shall be a new conception of sin ; and it will be a recognition of the sinfulness of *disbelieving* Christ. We must remember that we are studying a passage written by John, and it must be looked at from John’s point of view. Two benefits provided by Christ are exceedingly, even exclusively, prominent in the Gospel according to John ; namely, light and life. Those who undervalue and even deprecate this Gospel because it is all alight with the divinity of our Lord, ought to value it because it makes so much of his teaching. “The words that I speak unto you, are spirit and are life” (6 : 63). He said a great deal more than any orthodox trinitarian would venture to say, or perhaps can comfortably repeat : “This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send” (17 : 3).

John’s view of belief corresponds to his view of truth. To Paul belief is trust ; to John it is credence. Paul’s belief confides in Christ as the Saviour, John’s belief accepts Christ as the truth. In this case as in all cases a writer must be interpreted by his situation. In the case of Paul this is familiar. As a faithful Pharisee he had found that he could not be justified by works. The law condemned him ; as a believing Christian he had learned that he could be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. It was for Paul the problem of righteousness, forensic and moral. This became his through faith, and faith was trust in Christ.

John's point of view is widely different, and hardly taken into account. No doubt this is why the orthodox so fail to recognize what John means by *believe*, and find no place in their distinctively Pauline systems for the importance which John sees in truth. John does not begin with his religious experience and work out, as Paul does, a doctrine of forgiveness on condition of faith. John does not start with his personal experience; he does not even assume a human point of view. He begins at the beginning; and at the beginning Christ is God, is Maker, Preserver, Life, Light. He who is all this to all creatures came to his own world, and the world would not recognize him. He even became one of us men, and men would not receive him. How awful the contrast between what Christ was and how he was met. To John, looking at what he was and what he had become, the thing of sole importance could only be to believe Christ. There could be no other work of God except to believe him whom God had sent (6 : 29). To believe Christ will secure all that Christ came for. If he lays on men commands, to believe him should lead to obedience. If he offers benefits, believing him can alone make sure of those benefits. If he is to be lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness, nothing will come of it to any who do not look because they believe. Or, if eternal life is offered, it can be found nowhere than in a credible knowing of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Paul's trust implies credence, and John's credence leads to trust; but trust is what belief means to Paul, and credence is what it means to John.

From John's point of view it is possible to under-

stand his incessant presentation of Christ as the truth. So bent is he on justifying belief in all that Christ was, that in Christ John finds God brought within reach of the senses. He makes this point in both his Gospel and his first Epistle. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory" (John 1 : 14). "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples ; . . these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20 : 30, 31). So begins and so ends his Gospel. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled" (1 John 1 : 1). "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know the True One, and we are in the True One, in his Son Jesus Christ" (5 : 20). So begins and so ends his great Epistle.

Since to believe Christ carries with it all good, disbelief includes all evil. If "he that believes on him is not judged," then "he that believes not has already been judged" (3 : 18). This sharply offsets his assurance that "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world." Oh, it was blameworthy not to believe. "Ye have even seen me, and do not believe" (John 6 : 36).

If it all seems perilously near making eternal life or death a matter of intellection, we have the Master's prompt explanation, that men disbelieved because when light came they loved darkness and hated light. And they hated light "because their deeds were evil" (3 : 19).

We should now be prepared to see that Jesus referred to no formal maladjustment when he said that the



Holy Spirit would "convict in respect of sin, because they believe not in me." The Holy Spirit could expose no more radical evil. What conscience learns as to sin is no special lesson of the Holy Spirit until he makes this point, "It is sin not to believe in Christ." This is the one sin which the gospel itself has to warn us against, because it is the one sin which the gospel itself makes possible. Men may have in fact as many virtues as they have in appearance, yet lack the great and vital grace of believing in Christ. It was so then, it is so now. And it remains a grievous sin, a sin which they grievously need to be convicted of, that they are rejecting the light which shines from God. It may be hard to persuade such men that they hate this light, and hate it because, for all their virtues, there is something evil in their works. They will not believe it unless they believe in Christ. Then they will believe it. What had seemed light within, they now see was darkness. But no other persuasion than that of the Holy Spirit can convince and convict them of the sinfulness there is in disbelieving Christ. Abundance of good preaching about good morals threatens to revive the Pharisaic righteousness and the Pharisaic wickedness. It is shutting out the true Light, it is curtaining off the real darkness. But the threat of this preaching will not be quite fulfilled. The Holy Spirit will never give up convicting the world of sin because it believes not in Christ.

## **2. Conviction of Righteousness**

"He will convict the world in respect of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye no longer be-

hold me." Explanations vary according as they set out from the antithesis between the convictions of sin and of righteousness; or from the explanation which Christ himself gave concerning the conviction of righteousness; or, in a manner, from both.

If we reason from the antithesis, then, unbelief being the culmination of sin, belief is at least the security for righteousness, for "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom. 3 : 22). This righteousness can now be ours because, as the argument runs, Christ has completed his atoning work, and is seated by the Father. Such an explanation is thoroughly like Paul, and thoroughly unlike John. It is the doctrine of justification by faith, of approved legal standing, that is, of acceptance "apart from works of law" (Rom. 3 : 28), even in spite of many violations of law (5 : 16); all of which is, as regards obligations to law, merely pardon, or remission of sins (4 : 7).

But divine forgiveness is not a gift of God dwelt on by John. The only reference to it in his Gospel is the authority which Jesus conferred on his apostles when he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them" (20 : 22, 23).<sup>1</sup> Righteousness, then, is not, according to John, pardon, a release from the claims of law; nor does it describe forgiveness, God's personal acceptance of us as though we had not sinned. Righteousness, according to John, is the quality of being

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<sup>1</sup> As John's first Epistle contains a reference to propitiation (2 : 2) wholly wanting in his Gospel, so does it also twice refer to remission of sins (1 : 9 ; 2 : 12) ; but the characteristic teaching of both documents is the same, in Christ is life.

right ; it is moral, not forensic (*cf.* 1 John 2 : 29 ; 3 : 7, 10). This is its meaning also in the other Gospels (Matt. 5 : 6, 20 ; Luke 1 : 75). With Jesus the well-known doctrine is that righteousness does not consist even in absolute conformity of living to law. It must reign in the heart (Matt. 5 : 22, 28). Not that the law may be blamelessly violated in the smallest particular. It was the Pharisees' way to break some least commandment, and to teach men so (Matt. 5 : 19, 20), as it was their way to be punctilious about some minute, non-moral tithing of herbs, and to be reckless of the weightier demands of morality (Matt. 23 : 23). Woe to them ! Christ, with his strict idea of righteousness, was not declaring that the Holy Spirit would convict men because they lacked a merely legal justification. However true Paul's doctrine about righteousness, it is not the doctrine of the Gospels as to that word. This saying, then, of our Lord cannot be interpreted merely by its contrast with what goes before. Conviction about sin is not offset by conviction about remission of sins.

Is it, then, to be understood from the Master's own explanation of the ground on which the Spirit will convince of righteousness ?—"because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more." He went in his visible body. His resurrection was completed by his ascension. Death had no power over him, did not permanently disgrace him. Hence some infer that the conviction imparted to the world by the Spirit is that the accused Christ was righteous. As against this explanation it has been pertinently suggested that it would have required him to say, "The Spirit will convince of *my* righteousness." It seems then hardly adequate to regard

the righteousness about which the world was to have a new thought as merely Christ's innocence of the charges on which the world condemned him. The *ground* on which the new conviction would be enforced did not of itself alone explain the *nature* of the conviction.

A more satisfactory view is reached by allowing the contrast between the convictions of sin and righteousness and the ground on which the contrast rests, to explain each other. Thus we reach the conclusion that the new thought about righteousness must, like the new thought about sin, have its relation to Christ, and must also be justified by his ascension to the Father. This is the thought so new then, so old now: *Christ is the ideal of righteousness*. The world gathers from the ascended Christ a conviction of righteousness which the Holy Spirit will not let it lose. It is not a conformity to law but a fruit and exposition of life. If it were merely legal the utmost to be said would be, "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies" (Ps. 119 : 2); while the most in the way of legal righteousness that many Christians could feel sure of would be, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Ps. 32 : 1). As to true righteousness the fit word of Jesus was, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5 : 8).

If Christian people hardly boast of a blessedness so transcendent, the world, all the same, has learned from the Holy Spirit himself that only the pure in heart see God, or ought to, or wish to. Now that he has *lived the righteousness* which the Spirit commends, when he went back to take his place beside the Father Christ became like a new orb in our heavens, brighter and

steadier than any that has shined there, a star which never pales by day, because in the presence of its brightness the deep heavens are dark and the very sun shines by reflected light. Christ is the Light of the world. If the world does not praise his people it praises him. The ancient Pharisee would not accept our Lord, and now the world for all its censoriousness, is beginning to perceive who the modern Pharisee is. It is surely not one who stands afar off and beats upon his breast. It is the one who, lifting his eyes unto heaven, thanks God that he is not as other men or even as these church-members. Does that man go down to his house justified? Does not the Spirit of God intimate the possibility of a righteousness different from his, and of a sin which is quite his own? The righteousness, then, of which the world is convicted by the Holy Spirit, is the ideal righteousness of Jesus Christ.

### 3. Conviction of Judgment

Every truth to which the Holy Spirit is to testify is a "truth as it is in Jesus." Every conviction which he is to impress upon the world is a conviction suitable to the world's relations with Christ. The conviction that judgment has been given against the Prince of this world supplements the convictions as to sin and as to righteousness. The conviction that disbelieving Christ is the culmination of sin, issues in conviction that the Prince of this world is judged, judged with the stern judgment due to a false judge; for he falsely condemned the Christ. The conviction that Christ is the ideal and type of righteousness is also a judgment against the Prince of this world; for he continually se-

cures a worldly minded decision that there is no need to be righteous as Christ is righteous, and as often finds the conscience of Christendom reversing the wicked judgment and condemning him who procured it. Again and again Satan has had his way against Christ, only to find himself condemned by the sound judgment which the Holy Spirit inspires in the consciences of men who know about Christ.

There need be no question as to what the conviction of judgment primarily referred to. It was then the "hour and power of darkness." The spirit of the hour had abruptly changed. For fear of the people the rulers had forbore to touch the Lord. Now the people were about to clamor for his crucifixion. But their hour (Luke 22 : 53) was his hour too. Again and again it is written that he knew his hour had come (John 13 : 1 ; 17 : 1). It was the hour when the Prince of the world would make sure of condemning the Christ, and make sure of being himself condemned.

One cannot say that it was altogether a false move. The spirit of all malice got himself condemned, but he got also many an enemy of Christ condemned. He could not wreck the mission of the Son of Man, but he could ruin many men. The same judgment is constantly risked by him for the sake of the same result. He cannot thwart the Christ ; he can only make sure of Christ's success. He cannot check the beginning of the new dispensation ; he can help to institute that beginning. He cannot even prevent founding the society of those who believe in Jesus, but he can destroy his own followers who will not believe in Jesus.



And this is what he is perpetually doing. Every age seems at the time an age of unbelief. Always one sees a new chance that faith may perish from the earth. This threat makes the church tremble. It terrified the first companions of Jesus. Unbelief seemed about to prevail. Judgment by every court and every crowd was against Jesus. The shepherd was smitten and the sheep were scattered. Since then the terror has never been so extreme. Even those who knew the personal Jesus and loved him as their intimate Teacher and absolute Lord, were less brave and less faithful than those blessed ones since that day who have not seen and yet have believed. But they too have been afraid that the judgment of the world was going against Christ. They have thought that maybe themselves only would believe in Christ. And in one respect there has been more for them to fear than for the first disciples. All infidelity since that earliest day has called itself enlightenment. The generation in which it seems especially victorious, when its successes have been most startling, is called the "Clearing-up time" or the "Illumination." Voltaire and Diderot have been its high priests, its Annas and its Caiaphas. Their judgment was boldly pronounced, their prediction that Christianity was about to be extinguished was confidently proclaimed. The French revolution was an earthquake. It shook all lands, even ours. Its rampant atheism threatened to overthrow all Christian institutions as well as all sorts of tyrannies, all Christian faith as well as all Romish superstition. But some even of the terrorists became satisfied that if the people had no God it would be necessary to invent one; and soon it was once more

evident that for Christendom there was no God but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; indeed, no God at all unless Christ could win acceptance as his Son.

It has taken but a few swift years at the end of the nineteenth century to repeat the lesson of the century's beginning. Agnosticism is more specious than the old atheism. It has been less scurrilous in opposing Christianity but not less deadly. Yet not many years after it had set up its altar "To the Unknown God" it became as clear as Paul tried to make it to the Athenians, that he whom they ignorantly worshiped had been made known in Christ. The Spirit of Light repeated his judgment against the Prince of Darkness. Then criticism threatened to decide against the veracity of the Bible ; but the whole process of modern criticism has not been more unequivocally hostile to certain formal doctrines which had long prevailed about the Book, than friendly in the end to the spiritual teachings which are the substance of the Book. And the reason why the Bible now stands before the world unchallenged and unchallengeable is that it gives us Christ ; which is virtually to say that Christ gives us the Bible. It is ever plainer that disbelief of Christ is at bottom immoral ; that judgment against him is sought only by the Father of lies.

The disbelief in Christ, which has been the sole ground for judgment against his supreme lordship, often allies itself to the Sadducean spirit, the aristocratic intellectualism that dislikes faith, seeks to express it in the lowest possible terms, and confine it to the narrowest territory. Yet though so pretentious

and overbearing, disbelief in the mission of Christ is not so dangerous by far as disbelief in the righteousness of which he is the exposition and the type. No righteousness can seem authoritative except a perfect and ideal righteousness. Any incomplete law is condemned by the moral insight of men. They may hardly know why; but it is condemned because of its incompleteness. So far as it is seen to be incomplete, it seems to be arbitrary. And notwithstanding the tendency of people to put themselves under religious restrictions and requirements of a thoroughly arbitrary sort, and to substitute these in a pharisaic or ascetic way for moral duties, none the less in the distinctively moral sphere men sooner or later detect, distrust, and abhor arbitrariness. Recollecting now that, as mentioned above, the arbitrariness of a moral code may be as conspicuous in its slackness as in its excess, in its failure to require all that is normal as in its exaction of something non-natural; that, in fact, the artificiality of a moral standard is marked by puritan excess only in limited regions and for comparatively brief periods, while popular moral standards the world over in all ages are extremely defective in the presence of absolute morality; bearing this in mind we see how any generation may produce its own unsparing John the Baptist, its *vox clamantis in deserto*, who will be sure of a hearing because he is so stern, and who will draw all Jerusalem and Judea to him, if only he will rebuke the shortcomings and iniquities of every class, and denounce even the punctilious Pharisees of the day as a "brood of vipers."

To keep down the general conception of moral duty

is the ordinary and pet device of the tempter. If he can by any chance foster a skepticism about the need to be "righteous over much," if he can make the ideal goodness of Jesus seem beyond all practicality, beyond the limits even of good sense, he has taken the surest step toward a decorous almost reverent judgment against Jesus. But it is after all the most hazardous course which the tempter could choose. Again and again the Holy Spirit has secured at the bar of the world's conscience a reversal of the false judgments of the Prince of this world. Christ is now spoken of everywhere as the foremost moral teacher. If no other word is uttered in his praise, every one would be shocked to hear this claim for him denied. It is equally recognized that his teachings were set forth by his life quite as impressively, quite as intelligibly, and quite as comprehensively as by his precepts.

It is true that doubt about the claims of Christian righteousness has not fed in our day, as in other days, on undisguised and publicly tolerated debauchery. Vice for vice's sake is not stainless now. It is only as one's line of business, or his profession, seems to demand a relaxation of strict uprightness that men grow incredulous of rigorous obligation in such cases. A ring of politicians, for example, is ready to applaud the cynical declaration of a ringleader that he is in politics for his own pocket all the time. An association like that of the liquor dealers doubtless feels that the reproaches of other men against its business are unjust and foolish. It may even feel at liberty to take any steps to make sure of favorable legislation, and is satisfied to leave all personal responsibility with the

lawmakers who can be bribed, or the weaklings who let themselves become sots. It is a long time since we have heard objections to the opera or the drama on account of tendencies and abuses. Both the spoken and the musical drama have the field to themselves, clear of puritanical protest. The portraits and written sketches of actors and actresses, particularly of actresses, occupy a space in daily and periodical literature which belongs to them if they are the foremost personages in our land, and which helps to make them so, if not already such. But just in connection with this rapidly gained and complete victory of the histrionic art, the new productions which it offers are notoriously falling off in literary and musical distinction, as well as in social propriety and moral decency. Is it not a reproach to the newspaper press that some journals cater so to evil, unwholesome taste that they are nicknamed "yellow"? Are the lawyers many who would refuse a case in which to save a client would be to sacrifice justice? And does the existing professional honor condemn them? Are not the ministers of the gospel plenty, according to common fame, who are controlled by mercenary considerations in deciding where they will labor? And do not a great many know the seductions of the far worse temptation to be pleasers of men? Is it not notorious that success in so doing is at cost of the legitimate ends of a sacred calling? Surely, the tempter is busy in our day lowering the professional as well as business standards of righteousness. And it is a question which many hardly face, how far he is succeeding.

But let no loyal Christian forget that the Holy Spirit is to convict the world itself of righteousness and of

judgment, and of both together. The righteousness of Christ is so far above all conventional standards, whether of commerce, of art, of profession, or of society, in all forms and phases of associated living, that the contrast cannot be permanently concealed. We may believe, we may confidently expect, that the worse the contrast grows, the deeper the deeds of darkness are, and the more hostile the general habit is to the Light, the more distinct will be the revelation of Christ's righteousness, and the clearer the verdict against the Prince of this world with all his following. When or how the public conscience is to be aroused we need not try to foresee. But neither need we forget that it was a gross and general moral degeneracy which awakened the protests of Luther against a degenerate church, with its degrading doctrines and practices; also that it was by preaching Christ that the Reformer was in the way to revolutionize Europe. Two centuries later the Wesleyan revival in England and the corresponding movement in America, were occasioned by similar, if less gross, unrighteousness, and were remedied by practically the same preaching. Again and again, chiefly if not exclusively in the hour of the power of darkness, has the Prince of this world been judged before the face of the world. The same Spirit, we may hope, will effect the same result by the same inexhaustible means.

While the chief interest in studying the office of the Holy Spirit to the world turns on the results of his direct ministration of the truth to the hearts of worldly men, we are not to overlook that by the word which



the Spirit has inspired, and the literature which has followed, as well as by the instruction and appeals of God's messengers in every generation, the Holy Spirit is less directly convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. All of us who have turned to Christ were led by the Spirit through the agency of good men. But by however various means and different agents, the one question with which the Holy Spirit has ever challenged and will challenge the attention of mankind, is the question once put by our Lord himself to his maturing disciples: "What think ye of Christ?"

## CHAPTER XIII

### OFFICE TO BELIEVERS

IN this chapter more than any other we are in dire need of a strictly biblical theology. We are dealing with Christian experience, therefore with doctrines which are most loved and most firmly believed. But it is misunderstanding of experience that breeds nearly all, if not quite all, the fanaticisms. Nor is there another doctrine which opens so temptingly the way to extravagance as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

At the same time, interpretation of the Bible must be shielded from control by the academic spirit. Such a spirit invests all the Bible's teaching with an air of unreality. Intellectualism not only deadens but profanes the spiritual. Every proposition drawn from study of Scripture must be submitted to the test of experience. The heart may know whether the head tells the truth. No truth can suffer. No scriptural doctrine can be overthrown in the trial by experience. The Scripture is itself not less the voice of the soul in man than it is the voice of the Spirit of God. No method of interpreting the Bible can therefore be so scholarly as to dispense with the light of the inner life. But still less can it be safe in an unscholarly way to catch at a striking biblical phrase and build on it a doctrine out of the ordinary.

Happily, although we cannot distinguish in consciousness the Spirit of God from our own spirits, we can

note what our own spirits do when acted on by the Spirit of God. Fresh views, which the Bible is thought to afford, should be and are promptly put into practice by those who accept these views, and so life early renders a decision for or against the engaging novelty. In no case is the final judgment of the one court at odds with the final decision of the other. Sound expositions of the Bible and broad interpretations of life are always in accord. Fancifulness of interpreting either Bible or life is checked by the steadying and sobering effect of studying both. After a time both fanaticism and intellectualism are self-condemned.

### 1. The New Life

What we understand the new life to be turns to a noteworthy extent on the direction from which the subject is approached. Before taking up this subject the mind is invariably prepossessed by related notions. A thorough sacramentalist, ascribing the new birth to a baptism received not long after natural birth, cannot but hold a different view of regeneration from one who thinks its occurrence must be restricted to the age of moral accountability. If one is settled in opinion that the natural heart cannot be touched by spiritual truth, how can one agree about the new life itself with him who holds that the human will co-operates with the Holy Spirit in forming the new life? But faithfulness to any of these views abruptly rejects the suggestion of physiology, that the new spiritual life is but a moral aspect of transition from childhood through youth to manhood or womanhood, a period which lasts for the soul of a man only "until the skeleton is completely

ossified, . . . so that there is no further increase in stature, and all the teeth are in permanent functional position." Even this conception might hardly be in entire accord with a sociological view of the case, which would see in the new life something developed, it may be, out of the deep, deep thoughts of youth, but after all essentially not a new principle of life but a new way of living, not a new entity but a new process which is to be looked for when young people are wholesomely associated during the few years of susceptibility, change, and fixation. Our present study has already determined our point of view; the new life is to be surveyed from the side of the Holy Spirit's activity as set forth by the Scriptures and attested by experience.

### (1) **Its Production**

Is it proper to speak of the new life as a provision for believers? Many will be ready with an emphatic No. So far from faith having any part in producing the new life, they hold that only the new life can produce faith. A man's inborn depravity incapacitates him for receiving the things of the Spirit. This is a situation which, it is claimed, can be changed only by a sheer creative act of God, an act unmediated by any instrumentality, since instrumentality would be useless. The truth could not be used because the natural man could not feel the truth. Dead Lazarus might hear the loud voice of Jesus, for he loved that voice; but a dead soul must first receive an inflow of life from the Spirit. It has even been held that the gospel ought not to be offered to the unregenerate, for they cannot but reject it; and so to offer it might beget the pre-

sumptuous fancy that the offer could be accepted whenever one got ready, a fancy sure to steel the heart already hard.

It is true that the New Testament, which often mentions that justification is by faith, never teaches in so many words that regeneration is by faith; unless we find such a statement, as I think we may, in the poem of John's narrative: "As many as received him, he gave to them the right to become children of God, to them that believe on his name" (John 1 : 12). It should be admitted that faith is not familiarly put forward as a condition of regeneration. A natural omission, because faith does not seem germane to an unregenerate heart, and to make of it a condition precedent, would appear like making the new birth impossible.

And yet the Good News, or more generally the truth, is constantly represented as the instrument in renewal. Why else was the gospel preached except that, hearing it, men might accept it? "In Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel," said outspoken Paul to his Corinthians (1 Cor. 4 : 15). Peter was not behind in this view of things: we are "born again . . . through the word of God" (1 Peter 1 : 23). Even James, who really makes more of faith than to give away half its credit to works, is decided enough on the point before us: God "brought us forth by the word of truth" (James 1 : 18). But what is truth except as it is believed? Or will some one accord to a merely mental apprehension of it the potency which he denies to faith in it? Is it necessary that a man should *think* the truth in which it is impossible for him to *believe*? This at least was not Paul's opinion. What, then, according to Paul was the

good of hearing? This, that "faith comes by hearing" (Rom. 10 : 17).

How, then, resolve this paradox, that the Spirit transforms only through faith, yet faith is formed only by the Spirit? Perhaps in the fashion suggested by a quick-witted candidate for ordination I heard asked this very question, Which comes first, regeneration or faith? and he replied, "They are like the cannon ball and the hole; both go through together." If this is the solution, it is after all no exception among operations of the human soul. Trust and love for fellow-man give rise to each other. Who first said *pari passu* may have had some fact like this in mind.

More important still is the fact that the general office of the Holy Spirit to minister the truth is here seen to be in harmony with a fundamental law of men's minds. All emotions arise at the call of an idea. Cold thought sets the heart on fire, as the touch of an icicle makes potassium burn. Nothing else than ideas can transform character, well or ill. No wonder that the persuasive story of the cross should be the Spirit's instrument for a radical transformation. No wonder Paul could be eager to preach the gospel everywhere and felt no shame in publishing it. He had a good reason for his boldness. The gospel of Christ had proved to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1 : 16). It is not easy to think that he forgot himself in his ardor to defend the freedom of the gospel for Greek as well as Jew, and heedlessly ascribed more efficacy to the gospel than really belongs to it. Or suppose with him that a visitor strays into a gathering of Corinthian Christians, hears them prophesy, is



convicted of all, is judged of all, has the secrets of his heart revealed to his own astonished eye, and is so struck by the truth heard that he goes out and reports God to be among the Christians; is it a regenerate person who is so susceptible to truth? Paul calls him "an unbeliever and ungifted" (1 Cor. 14 : 24, 25). Surely, his conviction by the truth makes the truth a good instrument to begin his conversion with. That the truth is the Spirit's instrument and the ministration of truth the Spirit's office, even in the mysterious work of the new creation, will be the clearer when we consider what the nature of regeneration really is.

## (2) Its Nature

If we ask the New Testament what sort of change regeneration is, its answer one would suppose is in its names for the change. These are highly descriptive, even startling, one and all. But no two names describe the same process. No two, therefore, can be taken literally. In fact there is every reason for regarding them all as figurative. No spiritual entity or operation has any but a figurative name.

Two of these names seem closely enough allied. That great change is called a begetting (1 John 2 : 29 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 15) and a birth. But a father is not a mother. The mother name is the most familiar of all, made so by our Lord's own selection of it, as reported by John. He calls the change a new birth or a birth from above: "Ye must be born again" (John 3 : 7 ; 1 : 13 ; James 1 : 18 ; 1 Peter 1 : 23). But Paul calls it a new creation: "If any one is in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5 : 17 ; Gal. 6 : 15). Since birth and

creation both refer to something new, so far these terms are in harmony, but the processes are utterly different. Birth produces an individual by propagation from parents; creation by origination without parents, even without pre-existing materials. If among us men born of woman suddenly appeared a man born of no one, there might be no difference in the result of the two processes, but in the processes there would be difference to the last degree. Such a difference would be felt by all and most insisted on by those who know the most. Regeneration cannot be both new birth and new creation.

Paul and John agree to call it an animation of the dead, a bright and happy term. God hath "quickened us together with Christ" (Eph. 2 : 5); "We know that we have passed from death unto life" (1 John 3 : 14). But Paul also grimly reverses the figure, and muses on regeneration as a painful dying, a crucifixion with Christ (Rom. 6 : 3-11; Gal. 2 : 20; 6 : 14). In one of these cases he shows the lengths he will go in trying to tell how radical the change is; for he does not stop short of describing it as the extinction of his own being and the substitution of Christ for himself. "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2 : 20). If now we insist on taking this literally we have the unheard-of doctrine that the souls not of the unregenerate, but of the regenerate, are annihilated, and Christ incarnated in their place.

In another passage, with moderation as marked as his vehemence is in that last instance, Paul speaks of the change as an emancipation. We are "made free from sin" (Rom. 6 : 18). The burden of the bondage may

be odious, even horrible; we are delivered "from the body of death" (Rom. 7 : 24, 25). "Freedom" is our Lord's calm and brave word for it, "The truth shall make you free. . . If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8 : 32, 36). With Jesus it is even a process of enlightenment, a learning of him (Matt. 11 : 25-29); while James falls back upon the homely mystery of farming, and styles the new birth an implanting of truth (1 : 21).

Now there is no reason to suppose that regeneration involves processes of both begetting and birth, or of birth besides creation. It cannot be a dying and a rising, although it has aspects distinguishable by these names. Nor is it at once an extinction of personality and a continuance of personality. It could not precisely consist in a setting free and a lighting up, nor in any one of all these processes and be an implanting too. That is to say, the Scriptural names for the Spirit's work being incompatible with each other do not exactly describe the Spirit's work. All but one of them must be figures of speech, and if we could agree upon one to be taken literally, that too would have to be taken figuratively, since all are physical titles for spiritual realities. But they are figures so strong as to indicate a change both deep and strange. Regeneration is radical and mysterious.

There is one text which, though not free from a figurative character, as indeed it could not be, seems to notify us what is the need and what the essential element of regeneration. Paul has been telling the vivid story of his conflict with "the law of sin." By *law* he means a ruling principle. And he says, "The ruling

principle of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the ruling principle of sin and death" (Rom. 8 : 2). The bondage is moral and the deliverance is moral. The need is moral and so also is the provision. The tyranny of sin, the liberty of righteousness; that is what regeneration needs to help us out of; this is what it helps us into.

But what the metaphysics of regeneration is there is no one to tell us. Just what the Holy Spirit does to the soul in order to reverse its ruling affection, to transform its fundamental moral quality, it is even presumptuous to affirm. Have we forgotten what Jesus said on this very point to Nicodemus? Birth of the Spirit is recognizable but unexplainable. We hear the wind but do not know its source nor its goal (John 3 : 6-8). Are we at liberty, then, confidently to affirm that "the new man" which we ought to "put on" is an entity distinct from "the old man" which we ought to "put off"? (Eph. 4 : 22-24); that "whosoever is born of God" and "doth not commit sin" and "cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3 : 9), is another being from the one who deceives himself and has no truth in him if he says he has no sin in him? (1 John 1 : 8); or that one maybe can be both sinless and a sinner at the same time? that the soulish man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God because he has no spirit of his own, while he that is spiritual judges all things because he has a soul and a spirit too? (1 Cor. 2 : 14, 15); that those of us who become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1 : 4) have received an addition to our soul-stuff, and are now, as we were not before, in species partly divine? that to say "Christ is

our life" (Col. 3 : 4) is to say that Christ has become literally our vital principle, as much ourselves as our own souls are? that the regenerated man who finds himself doing what he would not may make bold to declare that this is not after all his own doing, but that sin does it in him? (Rom. 7 : 15-17.) Is all or any of this what we are to accept and announce as the metaphysics of the new birth? Can there be a new self plus the old self? Is there a new nature besides the old nature? except as there are new affections as well as old affections, new moral qualities better than the old moral qualities.

Or has our very self been made almost as good as new? It needs to be. It was the very self of the first man, if we may be permitted any longer to believe in a first man, that fell, and it is the damaged nature inherited from him, which sorely enough requires not to become another being, but to be renewed after the image of him that created us (Col. 3 : 10). Is not the believer made partaker of the divine nature in the sense that he is becoming godly, not partly God, Christlike, not Christ; that according to God's gracious predestination for his people he is being conformed to the image of his Son, called, justified, glorified? Is not just this what we have individually rejoiced in, that, while we hardly felt like the same persons, we knew all the time that we were the very same, transformed?

If no one can expound for us the metaphysics of regeneration, any one can tell what men need. They need to be saved from sin; they need that the hearts born disloyal to God should become loyal; supreme self-love ought to be supplanted by supreme love for Christ. If the new birth does this, this is all that it

must do ; if it does not effect this, it has failed, no matter how mysterious, how dumbfounding the change. We need not hesitate to say that, if any one is discontented to know only the ascertainable moral character of regeneration, to concede indeterminateness in its metaphysics, he is belittling instead of magnifying the Spirit's work, he is making great account of the intellectual and small account of the spiritual. We may reconcile ourselves to invincible ignorance about what regeneration is, if only we experience what it does. And it does this : it provides for conversion of love and life. The Spirit regenerates a man, but a man converts himself, and truth is the effective instrument in both processes.

One might very well be satisfied with concluding that regeneration is a radical moral change, spiritual but not literally vital. That is, regeneration is *a change in the quality not in the quantity of the soul.*

## 2. Progress of the New Life

If unwelcome differences of opinion exist as to the nature of regeneration, as to sanctification they are confusing and distressing. Here is a real evil. The evil is aggravated by the fact that those alone who hold peculiar views are able to gain the public ear. It easily follows that these brethren are the only ones who seem to most people to care for spiritual progress. But there are so many who do care, especially so many who are not blind to the meagreness of their own attainments, that one who comes with a fresh and urgent word has always been able to count on a hearing.

Meanwhile, they who distrust the new theories and new measures, in particular those who have tried all



the novelties and been disappointed by them all in turn, remain dumb. No one likes to set himself against the good men and women who are all aglow with what they count good news. The old army chaplain had pathetic and wonderful stories in plenty, after the war, about soldiers who came quietly to him with keepsakes and a message to their dear ones, because they were going into battle with a mystic premonition of being shot. But I never heard the chaplain tell about the premonitions which were not fulfilled, nor about the last messages which happily there was no occasion to send. Now when we have listened attentively to all that experience has to say in favor of strange and happy gifts and graces, may we not hope that some among our spiritual mentors will be less partial to remarkable stories than the old chaplains were? And who knows but something not startling at all, only explicit, profitable, and not unaccountable, may be forthcoming in favor of those scriptural teachings about sanctification which are so obvious that no one thinks of denying them, no, nor very often of so much as mentioning them? May not progress in the new life be possible by means which do not at once strike us as the ingenious invention of a pious and persuasive, but possibly not thoroughly informed and deferential student of God's word? The advocate of any religious novelty may be counted on to have at his tongue's end a few favorable texts, which he expounds in a way perhaps never before thought of, and which biblical theology could not for a moment accept. Now the only protection against whimsies on the part of those who devoutly love and humbly accept the teachings of their

Bibles, is the comprehensive and thorough survey which biblical theology practises, and which alone it can indorse. If a compendious statement of results afforded by this method does not prove satisfactory, no other course is open for these pages deliberately to follow.

There is one question about sanctification which is the pith of many questions, and in the presence of which all other questions on this subject fade into insignificance. That question is, Can the highest Christian attainments be reached by *a process of growth* which the Holy Spirit fosters and guides, or only by a *special gift* of the Spirit of God on the fulfillment of *special conditions* by the spirit of man? The point of view, the direction of approach, is important.

### (1) **The Paradox**

The nature of the case with the regenerate but un-sanctified is not obscure. We can know from it what is needed. Stated as carefully as possible, regeneration is such a work of the Spirit of God on the soul of a man as inclines him to love God supremely. That new love is inward conversion, and a new course of life is outward conversion, for the sake of which the Holy Spirit regenerates.

The moral change in regeneration is so radical that, from the nature of the case, sin should thereafter be impossible. The newly regenerate often feels that he can never sin again. He is feeling just what John alleged in his extremest statement on this subject: "Whosoever has been begotten of God does not commit sin, because his seed abides in him; and he cannot

sin, because he has been begotten of God" (1 John 3 : 9). Jesus said in effect the same thing : "If any one love me he will keep my words" (John 14 : 23). What less is involved in the sound saying of James : "Faith if it have not works is dead in itself" ? (2 : 17.) Even Paul goes to equal lengths with John, but does not seem to, because his terms are not so boldly paradoxical. And yet they are sufficiently so. What else is this : "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God" ? (Rom. 6 : 11.) Or this : "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" ? (Gal. 2 : 20.) Or this : "How shall we who died to sin, live any longer therein" ? (Rom. 6 : 2.) Who can tell how ?

We cannot sin, but we do. The situation is a self-contradiction. We have a word for it, *inconsistency*. Things do not hang together ; they exclude each other. Each makes the other impossible ; yet there they are, side by side, supreme love for God, and intrusive relish for a sin. John himself admits the actuality of this impossibility. The child of God cannot sin, he says ; but also says, "If any one sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And that John refers to the sins of the regenerate, impossible but actual sins, we are assured by his next words : "He is a propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2 : 1, 2).

Now let us not overlook that this inconsistency is matched in men's ordinary relations. Our best loved friend may say, "You do not love me as you pretend, or you could not do me this ill turn." But we do love our friend, and would make any great sacrifice for him ;

yet we are also guilty of this petty unfriendliness. From the top of our Mount Washington the eye can sweep a circuit of many hundred miles; but the tip of one's little finger, if held close to the eye, shuts out the whole horizon, or all the stars of heaven. Some trivial temptation, if allowed close enough, can for the time cover our deepest love and strongest purpose; and so we sin against Him for whom no doubt a plenty of us would lay down our lives.

## (2) The Solution

So paradoxical is the situation. Regeneration has effected a transformation so thorough that of itself it leaves no place for anything short of absolute moral perfection, and yet to escape from persistent and harrowing imperfections a process of sanctification is necessary. It cannot be a more searching process than was the new birth. The Spirit cannot be mightier than it was in the new creation. No change is hinted at in the New Testament to compare with that change. If sanctification is really a special act of the Spirit, analogous to regeneration, this ought to be mentioned somewhere. It is nowhere mentioned, and therefore not to be believed in. Such a gift of the Spirit of God as provides for the new birth is all, if it abides, which could be needed for progress of the new life. It is incredible, and it is nowhere intimated that the Holy Spirit having begun such a good work in us will leave it there at its beginning in its babyhood, or needs to do more for its fostering than to keep alive the relation which he has himself established. Nothing is full-grown at birth. From the state of the case, then, it is

certain that the Spirit which created us anew in Christ Jesus is needed, and is able to transform us progressively by the constant renewing of our minds. That a special gift besides the abiding gift is required the case in no way indicates, and the silence of Scripture does not allow us to concede.

This by no means precludes long preparation and rapid culmination. The great decisions are abrupt perhaps in most cases, but if wisely formed they had been slowly maturing. There is often something volcanic, convulsive in the lives of the strongest characters. But this is not uniformly true, and should never be proposed as an ideal to one's self or others. Saul of Tarsus had to experience such a conversion, but where does he hint that one such experience was not enough for him?

### (3) The Means

That an extraordinary operation of the Holy Spirit is not requisite for sanctification is as plain when we look at the means as in considering the Agent. The Agent is the Holy Spirit; the means is the truth. The prayer of our Lord was, "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth" (John 17 : 17). Paul gives thanks for the Thessalonians, beloved of the Lord, whom God had chosen to salvation "in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2 : 13); and Peter puts it with admirable precision, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (1 Peter 1 : 22).

There are but two imaginable ways of using truth for such a purpose. One way regards it as something said, as in effect a magical formula, an incantation which

makes sure of a benefit without any intelligible relation to it. Many may charge their devotional habits with this irrationality and superstition. To read just so much of Scripture daily, say a chapter, and to clinch their petitions by a closing formula, without which prayer would go for naught, like "for Christ's sake," or "for thy name's sake," and to exercise no reflection on what is read or said, has no more of Christian character than there is in refusing to be one of thirteen at table or to begin a journey on Friday. All deference to "signs" and formulas is a relic of the lowest form of paganism, namely, the worship of fetishes, queer objects, and happenings. God could not conceivably make his will known in such ways, or tie up his gifts with trivialities; but the devil might, and some malign influence succeeds thus in perverting the holy usages of Christianity. One who believes in God ought to hate and loathe this bondage to superstition in all its forms. Let us trust in God, make haste to do his will, and defy Satan with all his trumpery "signs," above all taking care that the very habits by which we make sure to keep ourselves for God do not become a snare to us.

The other way of using truth regards it as an idea which, being established as a conviction, evokes suitable emotion and secures a corresponding decision of the will. This is the process through which ideas are incessantly modifying character. No one can reasonably or reverently expect the Holy Spirit to use the truth in any other way. A process fixed by the laws of the human mind was fixed by the Creator, and only by such a process can the Spirit of God lead human minds toward full growth. If we forget Christ we cannot be



ruled by love for him ; if we do not think over his commandments we do not "have" them and will not "keep" them (John 14 : 21) ; and thus the ministry of the Spirit is too often excluded from our lives. To dwell upon attractive evil is to become evil ; to dwell upon the good is to make it attractive, and so ourselves to become good. No other way can be relied upon.

Such a conclusion as to the Spirit's efficiency debars magical sanctifications. And not less than magical are the alleged abrupt transitions, which without the instrumentality of truth convert a low-grade Christian into the highest type of saint. These changes cannot be wrought by aid of truth, for they are marked by inertness rather than activity of mind, by submission to a molding from without rather than by co-operation with the Holy Spirit in a development from within, by passivity which debars the use of ideas rather than by meditation, which appropriates ideas. That which Peter said to Cornelius and his friends is normally going on in us : "The Holy Spirit . . . purified their hearts by faith" (Acts 15 : 9).

John's claims for the truth were examined in Chapter XII. For our present purpose we note only the extraordinary fact that the fourth Gospel, while it has most to say concerning the divinity of Christ, insists most on his office as a teacher. To be sure, not John alone cries up the truth. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is that "the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened" (1 : 18). He "counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord" (Phil. 3 : 8). And he approaches the position of John when he writes to Timothy, "I know whom I

have believed " (2 Tim. 1 : 12). But John never says with Paul that "knowledge puffeth up," no, not even for the sake of exalting love (1 Cor. 8 : 1). See what John says: "The truth shall make you free" (8 : 32); "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life" (6 : 63); "Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you" (15 : 3); finally, what we would not have dared to say, in fact do not repeat nor quite take for reality: "This is life eternal, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send" (17 : 3).

These prodigious texts and teachings we leave to the Unitarians. The texts have no office in evangelical preaching, so far as I have heard it, nor for the teachings has a place been found in orthodox theology. But the fact that John couples these almost unbounded claims for the truth with the highest claims for Jesus ought to notify us that the Unitarians can hardly have gone into the merits of the case when they acknowledge Christ merely as a prophet. If in imagination we stand where John did, recognize Jesus as God with us, and enjoy the same intimacy with him, then it must seem to us, as it did to John, that so to know Jesus was nothing short of eternal life. It was a transforming intimacy, only the closest intimacy, of which Jesus could say, "No longer do I call you servants; . . . but I have called you friends; because all things that I heard from my Father I made known to you" (15 : 15). Jesus took his disciples into his heart when he opened to them his mind. Always "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant" (Ps. 25 : 14).

This is the royal road to holiness, namely, intimacy with Christ. It is our road, when the Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them to us. Paul's phrases resound with the dignity of it: "I bow my knees to the Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3 : 14-19). No other power can "make for righteousness" as does intimacy with Christ, imparted and matured by the Holy Spirit's ministry of the truth. The mental activity which it requires ought to be required. A thoughtless sanctification should be impossible, and is impossible. The persistence which it implies is from the nature of the case indispensable. What consecration can be found in a flaccid will? Could sterling character be acquired less laboriously? If the highest ranges of Christian living seem to be less easily attained by careful obedience to the truth than by a mystical uplift to which one has only passively to submit, ought the prize of a high calling to be reached without effort? If our utmost vigor is demanded, our Leader never failed to show the like devotion. Paul said that to buffet his body was the price of bringing it into subjection and of saving himself from the fate of a castaway (1 Cor. 9 : 24-27). The divine inworking requires us to work out our own salva-

tion (Phil. 2 : 12). We shall need patience to run the race where Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12 : 2) ; and though the outward man weakens in such a struggle, "the inward man is renewed," not once for all, "but day by day" (2 Cor. 4 : 16).

It is no doubt possible for a man to make an accounting now and then with his ideals, to discover wherein he has fallen short and to decide how he may mend the matter. But it is disastrous to take for granted that the whole business of life must be suspended for the sake of taking an inventory, and meanwhile to go on in a slack way because one does not feel ready for just that process. It is not the scriptural way. The Bible teaches that the best we can do is a continuance of what we have already done. "Having begun in the Spirit, are we now made perfect" in another way? (Gal. 3 : 3.) "Whereunto we have attained, in the same let us walk" (Phil. 3 : 16). We have made many a sad muddle, no doubt, of our attempts to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5 : 16) ; nevertheless we do not give over our hope nor our determination. "For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness" (Gal. 5 : 5).

"Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live ; and let me not be ashamed of my hope" (Ps. 119 : 116).

### 3. Encouragement of the New Life

Under the head of Progress in the New Life nothing has been said about the peace and joy that figure so extensively in the experiences of those who claim to be sanctified. So largely do these states of sensibility prevail that to have peace and joy, if it is not exactly what being holy consists in to the minds of many, is

apparently what they aimed at in seeking for "holiness." Almost all clear-sighted Christians feel that this is a pitiful and hurtful mistake. If to *feel* well is the same as to *be* well, every bodily ailment could easily be cured for a while.

And yet feeling well is a proper accompaniment of good health, whether of body or soul. It is an encouragement of the new life. If it comes to choosing between a religion that consists in eating or not eating, in drinking or not drinking, and one that turns on gladness of spirit, we might not like being reduced to such an alternative, but we would have to admit that, while the devotees of religious excitement often exhibit something like a Bacchic frenzy, at least it is not an orgy of wine. When Paul learned that Roman Christians were wasting their force in disputes about food and drink, what apter thing could he say than that "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit"? (Rom. 14 : 17.) People whose religion makes them contentious had better be told that God's reign is peace. Those whose lives are passed in gloomy contemplation of their neighbor's market basket would find it more religious to have joy in the Holy Spirit. And if one is making everything turn on what he puts or refuses to put into his mouth, somehow he is missing what Christ said about the things that come from the mouth defiling (Matt. 15 : 11), and what Paul says of righteousness, not meats, as the stuff that God's kingdom is concerned with. To be spiritually minded is to belong to God, and "to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8 : 6). We must certainly avoid both the belittling error of making feeling the essence

of spirituality and the benumbing error of conceding to feeling no proper place. Its place is to encourage the new life. Happiness is a reward, an invigoration, and an inducement. With this obtrusive and practically important factor in the problem allotted its proper place, we may enter into the real merits of the case. It is the problem of Christian assurance, or as some prefer to state it, the Witness of the Spirit.

### (1) Representative Views

An entirely characteristic doctrine of Calvinists has been that, if any one finds himself in a state of grace, he knows it can be only because he is the object of God's election unto life ; and if he knows that God has elected him unto life, he may feel sure of his final salvation. It is a sufficiently logical deduction from the doctrine of unconditional predestination. The difficulty which it presents is in the application of it. How may I know that I am in a state of grace? Instead of being at liberty to infer final perseverance from regeneration, we are rather to infer regeneration from final perseverance. The words of Jesus are explicit : " If ye abide in my word, ye are truly my disciples " (John 8 : 31). The same fact is put in singular form by the writer to the Hebrews : " We have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm to the end " (Heb. 3 : 14). Or as John says of defections from the faith : " They went out from us, but they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would have abode with us " (1 John 2 : 19).

These are not unreasonable statements. One may be assured that he loves Christ only while he keeps



Christ's commandments (John 14 : 21). From the point of view of Calvinist doctrine, which denies that the regenerate can become unregenerate, a condition of soul which gives no present mark of regeneracy is not to be regarded as a lapse from which a child of God is certain to be restored, but rather as an indication that one has never been a child of God. This Calvinistic type of doctrine furnishes strong assurance to the faithful, and stern warning to the unfaithful. It has every possible word of courage for those who are God's own, and every startling word of terror for those who give no proof that they belong to God. If Jesus said that those the Father had given him none is "able to pluck out of his Father's hand" (John 10 : 29); he also said a word which was meant to bring all unbelievers to a stand, "No man can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him" (John 6 : 44).

And still it is probable that a great number of cold-hearted and disobedient professors of faith in Christ are half-consciously resting all their hope of eternal life on past indications of the new life. Yet these former indications lost their significance for the future when they ceased to exist.

After Luther had matured his doctrine, he saw and taught that to be justified by faith in Christ brings with it, from the nature of the case, assurance of justification. This assurance he recognized as a witness of the Holy Spirit, because it is the Holy Spirit that imparts faith. To believe in Christ for forgiveness would seem to be to believe that one is forgiven. This is certainly Paul's way of regarding the matter, and Luther strikingly repro-

duces Paul in his experience and his doctrine. "Being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5 : 1). Why not? How lack peace with God if we have faith in God?

To Luther faith brings assurance of much more than forgiveness. It includes assurance that God's word is true, and that the requirement which one follows is the very requirement of God. Vacillation, timidity, and feebleness mark the faint believer's life. "We must stand in such certainty of God's speaking and working in us, that our faith can say, 'What I have spoken and done, that has God done and spoken,' so that I am ready to die for it; else, if I am not certain of my affair, it stands upon sand, whilst God has ordained that our conscience must stand upon the solid rock." True faith alone, says Luther, has true knowledge of God. It is a perpetual looking at Christ. It is master, judge, and rule of all doctrine and prophecy.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt faith is cognitive before it can be trust. It discerns spiritual reality, and, discerning, confides. This relation unites the view of faith characteristic of John with that which is characteristic of Paul. To John, as we saw above (p. 216 f.) faith is believing Christ; to Paul it is trusting Christ. But neither apostle overlooks, still less excludes or could exclude, the other's meaning. Yet between knowing and trusting is another element in faith, namely, imagining, that is, imagining the unseen. Because Luther did not give this element its dues, he insisted rather harshly that a Christian ought not only to trust in Christ but feel sure that he is safe. Nearer the fact is the remark of Henry

<sup>1</sup> See Dorner's "History of Protestant Theology," Vol. I., pp. 240, 241.

Ward Beecher, that a man may have faith enough to be saved and not faith enough to feel sure of it. He may entrust himself to Christ without forming so lively an image, so strong a "realizing sense" of Christ as to be happy in his trust and calm in his confidence.

Deficiency in imagination of spiritual things is common. To many believers neither God nor Christ nor heaven nor existence out of the body seem realities. Inevitably these people miss the stimulus and the joy of imaging life after death and heaven and Christ and God. All these are accepted as realities, but do not seem like realities. Faithful men, deficient in imaging power, act indeed with reference to these realities; but they are Christians of firm principle, not of wholesome and happy sentiment. They have faith enough to be saved, but not faith enough to enjoy being saved. Others may reproach them, I cannot. I do not believe that the majority of people are so constituted that for them a constant vision of the invisible is practicable. It is enough if they are able daily without emotion, without the delightful support of a glimpse into the better world, to commit their souls to the unseen, unrealized Saviour, and daily renew their purpose to do his will.<sup>1</sup>

But besides doctrines of assurance built on doctrines of predestination and of justification is another, which is allied to the doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. It is a favorite doctrine with Wesleyans. It teaches that assurance is of two kinds, the witness of

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<sup>1</sup> The substance of this paragraph appeared in an article by the author in "The Baptist Commonwealth."

the Spirit of God and the witness of our own spirits. The former is direct. It is really a witness to our sonship. Two texts are especially relied on: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God" (Rom. 8 : 16); "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4 : 6). The witness of our own spirit is the recognition by ourselves of changes produced in us through the new birth.<sup>1</sup>

That "the fruits of the Spirit" indicate the new spiritual life all agree. The only question is as to direct witness of the Spirit. But a fair consideration of this question involves the much wider issue of true and false mysticism. This issue is involved in all far-reaching study of the source, nature, progress, encouragement, and resources of the new life. The present connection is suitable as any for its cursory examination.

## (2) **Mysticism**

The relation of the Holy Spirit to the human spirit is an unfathomable mystery. How he operates it is impossible to know. We may make sure, indeed, that he operates only by the co-operation of our own spirits in ways promised by the word of God. An activity of the Spirit not so promised could not be distinguished from out-of-the-way movements of the human mind. The one office promised, the all-including ministry of truth, is a signal illustration of the co-action of the Spirit of God with men's minds. The truth, however reached, must be thought. The Spirit aids our thinking and so secures the aim of the truth, namely, true living.

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<sup>1</sup> See Miley's "Systematic Theology," Vol. II., pp., 339 f.

Such, then, is the realm and range of true mysticism. The truth which the Holy Spirit first imparted to apostles and prophets he so illumines that its verity is assured; it becomes a conviction, a felt thought. Thoughts felt supply motives to action. Thoughts strongly enough felt issue in volitions and volitions in conduct. It must here be borne in mind that the Christian life is not an aggregate of unrelated decisions and acts. It is the Spirit's office to illuminate fundamental truth and keep alive fundamental principles of conduct. The Spirit testifies to Christ, and thus energizes faith, love, and loyalty Christward. It begets these in begetting the new life; it maintains the new life by maintaining these. How it acts on the mind in so doing is a mystery, but the belief that it so acts is a proper Christian mysticism.

False mysticism, mysticism pure and simple, as held by both Christians and heathen, is the doctrine that the Spirit of God directly imparts an idea, an emotion or a power. That power may be over nature and miraculous; it may be over one's self, issuing in sinlessness; or over others, as claimed by the Keswick school.

In order to make out this alleged direct operation of the divine Spirit on passive human spirits, it would be necessary to show that it had been included either in the New Testament's promise of the Holy Spirit or in its illustration of his functions. But while mysticism could not be proved from experience alone, on the other hand not even the New Testament's support would be sufficient if unattended by experience on our part. It might easily be that direct spiritual operations existed at one time and had been withdrawn.

Now false mysticism, which is mysticism pure and simple, is in a peculiar position with regard to scriptural support. It is not without a support from the Old Testament which is withheld by the New. The mechanical inspirations which were ascribed to ancient prophets, the supposed control of their minds by the Spirit of God as absolutely as our mind may control the unthinking body, this lower kind of inspiration which sought to be the highest, and which finds unmistakable illustration only in the frenzied behavior of King Saul among the prophets, or in case of the unintelligent gift of tongues among the Corinthians, such an inspiration as this illustrates that immediate control of the human spirit by the divine which mysticism insists upon. Of course, such an illustration would be most unsatisfactory to mystics, but it is all that the Bible unequivocally affords. The higher results of divine activity in the sphere of the human illustrate the coaction of both human and divine.

The obscure doctrine of angels, good and bad, would have to be canvassed in a thorough investigation of mysticism. It would seem, although the point is not quite clear, that in New Testament times angelic or demonic spirits were believed to act directly on the minds and bodies of men. Possessions and obsessions by demons were at least unhesitatingly accepted as real. Paul's saying, "Spirits of prophets are subject to prophets," can hardly have another meaning. The spirits were regarded by him as sent from God and as performing their office in subordination to those whom they inspired. These important chapters, the twelfth and the fourteenth in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians,



upon the whole present the personal Spirit of God impersonally ; but this particular verse (14 : 32), can hardly be understood as identifying the Holy Spirit with a *series* of influences. Can Paul here be speaking of the one personal Spirit of God as "the spirits of the prophets" ? John's injunction, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4 : 1), looks in the same direction. So also his reference to "every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh," and "every spirit that does not confess Jesus" (ver. 2 and 3). The natural meaning is that spirits good and evil in those days took possession, or sought possession of human minds and spoke by human tongues.

But this does not furnish illustration of the process alleged by mysticism, unless the mind of the man inspired was without share in the result and merely passive, like a photographic plate exposed to light. The very contents of the prophetic message, always so close to the prophet's own experience, exclude such a fancy. Even if a liability existed to irrational passivity under the influence of good spirits, as it certainly existed in the case of demoniacal possessions, Paul's directions to the prophets were a warning against self-surrender. To "try the spirits" also implied that reason could not be debarred from a share in the message. Paul's assurance that prophesying would lay bare the secrets of an unbeliever's heart (1 Cor. 14 : 24, 25) means that the prophet thought by the Spirit's aid just what a knowing man would think. Also that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says Jesus is accursed, and that no one can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12 : 3),

shows the contrast between being "carried away to dumb idols" (ver. 2) and being led of God. But in all this the Christian was actively loyal to Christ. Paul never held that the Holy Spirit so entirely possessed a man, that the Spirit and not the believer believed; that in the hour of inspiration the Spirit was the only thinker, and alone served God. How contrary this to Paul's account of spiritual gifts is too obvious to point out in detail. When the Holy Spirit or holy spirits animated a man it was the man that was animated. The New Testament is far from sustaining a false mysticism. The mind of man in those days was active as well as impressed. It was active in receiving impressions.

Experience at the present day fully corroborates this conclusion. The most rudimentary observation of our own mental processes refuses to tolerate the idea that the Holy Spirit is one spirit and ours another spirit, busied in us with thoughts, feelings, or resolves. To observation of others, above all to self-observation, it is one's own spirit which does all that is done. The Spirit of God aids us to do what we do well. If he does all, we do nothing. But our need is in all ways to serve God. If the Spirit, instead of aiding and directing our minds, hearts, and wills, takes our place, we are not yet beginning the true life; certainly the Spirit is not in the least promoting that life.

Prudence too raises the question how the Spirit of God, if he directly moves us, not employing the co-operation of our own faculties, can be distinguished from an evil spirit. It is scriptural and it is sane to reply that we must use our reason in order to know

that what takes place in us is reasonable and right. No thought about divine things, no feeling about God or man or ourselves, no decision to act is proper to submit to, however impressive, unless it accords with other doctrine, other feeling, other courses as to which there is no dispute.

Finally, all this is but saying that false mysticism cannot but be false, since true mysticism is true. The pretense that the Spirit of God acts directly on passive human spirits is completely excluded by the fact that the Spirit of truth acts by ministering the truth. The truth is the tool, not now the product of his ministry. He is not, so far as we have any reason to believe, directly imparting any new revelation. He is using Christian truth by unfolding its inner meaning and impressing its many applications. The result may even be as striking as though mysticism were true. The old doctrine of justification by faith was as new to the age of Luther as though Luther had been the first apostle to know and announce it. The Christian ages, like Christian men, without new and immediate revelations, may grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3 : 18).

The conclusions reached as to true and false mysticism have various applications, some of which must presently be noticed. The application to assurance of sonship is easy.

### **(3) Valid Assurance**

It is not the question what are valid proofs of regeneration, but what produces valid assurance of regeneration. To state those proofs would be far from doing

justice to such sayings as "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God," and "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Here we are listening to a verdict, not to an argument.

It is presumable that gifts of the Spirit do not differ in other respects more than in this respect. If he qualifies for various offices, he affords as various approval. But there should be, and there are modes of imparting the spirit of adoption which are common to all believers in all ages. At least two kinds of valid assurance are historic and supremely important.

To the first of these John refers in the words, "These things have I written to you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5 : 13). It is God's own testimony at once to his Son and to our sonship. We hear his majestic acknowledgment of Christ and it is felt to be his gracious acknowledgment of us. "This is the testimony of God, that he has testified concerning his Son. He that believes on the Son of God has the testimony in himself. . . And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. . . And we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us understanding, that we may know the True One; and we are in the True One, in his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John : 5 : 9-11, 20).

All this is thoroughly characteristic of John. To know the Son of God, to know him even through the senses first, by his indwelling afterward, and by conscious life through belief in him, this is John's special

way of looking at the whole relation of Christ to Christians. It is not a swiftly passing thought as to who Christ is, it is the abiding testimony of God. It is so peculiarly God's awful voice that "he who believes not God has made him a liar" (ver. 10); while he who believes in the Sonship of Christ believes in his own sonship. This is the diuturnal voice of God to the church, and it is the highest and fittest assurance to individual believers. So transcendent a reality as the divine and sole Sonship of our Lord cannot be accepted as fully as John accepted it, and not carry with it the consequent reality of our human and joint sonship; an open-eyed faith in the divinity of our Lord has the assertiveness of a dogma and the vitality of an experience. To decry the dogma is as unhistorical as to deny the life. Neither is admissible for the Christian. If the divine Christ is a reality lived in us it will force itself into dogmatic definition. Who could repress within himself the testimony of God to his Son without suppressing the testimony of God to his own adoption? And who could listen to the one but fail to hear the other?

This grandest assurance, which identifies belief in Christ with belief in our own adoption, is at the utmost remove from a mystical feeling directly imparted by the Spirit of God. And as far as it is from a mere feeling so far is it superior to it. Sheer feeling that I am a child of God could bring no assurance whatever of its own truth. It might be only a mood of my own soul, or even a fancy sprung from bodily well-being. It might be a downright falsehood by the father of lies. Thousands on thousands of times it has been one or another of these. But assurance of the truth which

God ministers concerning his Son is safe, and so is the assurance it brings that I too am God's child.

With the assurance of God's Fatherhood is associated an equal assurance of the believers' brotherhood. Not only do we ourselves "know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren" (1 John 3 : 14), but "by this shall all men know that we are Christ's disciples, if we have love one toward another" (John 13 : 35). We may very well feel ashamed to gather that we love Christ only from the fact that we love the Christlike. Who would not love such men? But we are not now estimating evidences of the new birth; we are considering what affords assurance of the new birth. It is strange, perhaps, to us that so lowly and instinctive a grace as brotherly love can have such value, but undeniably nothing awakens a more comfortable confidence that we are of God's household than to feel at home with his people. It is the surprising fact that brotherly love not only assures worldlings that we are not of the world, but it passes over to the world the Christian's own secret assurance that Christ is from God. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me" (John 17 : 23). Brotherly love is, after all, a radiant and a Christlike grace. There is no other which affords a clearer certainty that Christians are not like other men and that Christ is above all men. It grows directly out of the testimony which God has given concerning his Son and his household. So rare after all is this shining grace that its convincing energy may have to be imagined rather than observed.



The second ground of assurance is moral. It is a manifestation of the indwelling Father and of Christ to the obedient. It was precisely in answer to Jude's question how Christ would succeed in revealing himself to his disciples and not to the world. And he said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14 : 22, 23). Once more we must remind ourselves that we are not weighing proofs of the new birth, but studying the assurance that it has taken place. If our obedience is considered as evidence that we have been born again, who of us could regard his own evidence as complete? But to keep Christ's words, to have his commandments and keep them (ver. 21) is so far a reality that the Father dwells with the Son in Christians and somehow makes them aware of his presence. He that loves Christ not keeps not his sayings (ver. 24). There is a difference, and difference enough to supply a corresponding degree of assurance. If one dare not claim that he keeps Christ's commandments he knows at least that he has them and does not utterly disregard them.

We have already noted in Chapter X. that the obedience of Christian lives is the most pertinent and persuasive evidence which the world can receive that Christ is all that is claimed for him. The complete failure of his plans would be in effect as complete a refutation of his claims, while a measurable accomplishment of his purpose to overcome sin and bring in righteousness is in as large measure a vindication of Christ himself. That which assures the world reassures the disciple. A good conscience is a good witness. One is aware

whether he is for God or against him. For all his shortcomings and transgressions the believer knows whether his heart is with the Lord's host or enlisted against them. What is evidence to all the world ought to serve as assurance to the child of God. When we have made all allowance for traitors in the camp, for ill-disciplined, blundering, and fractious soldiers of Christ, the army is there; it knows where it is; it knows its Head; it knows his orders, and makes its poor attempt to obey them.

#### **4. Equipment of the New Life**

Of all topics touching the new life this is the most eagerly and anxiously canvassed by the devout. The statement might be extended to all branches of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. For many persons no other branch is so absorbing in interest as this. The equipment which, by common agreement, the new life may look for to the Holy Spirit, is private and untalked of; that which the most of us regard as questionable or even dangerous is heralded loudly and published as widely as possible. From the ecstasy of the thorough-paced mystic to the diametrically opposed antinomian righteousness of Plymouth Brethren, from the Romish saint with his supererogatory merit to the Protestant perfectionist with his "evangelical obedience," and from the early Protestant perfectionist's ingenuous but startling claim of sinlessness to the quiet but unquestioning "fullness" of the present day Keswick disciple, every species of beatitude and every kind of process for attaining it has been set forth and as long as possible insisted on as respectively the utmost which the Holy Spirit

does for the sanctified, and the surest approach to it, either with or without co-operation of the human will. For a somewhat detailed study of leading theories and practices the author may be permitted to refer to his little book on "The Highest Life," and for a judicious consideration of the many New Testament phrases and figures the reader may consult Rev. W. E. Biederwolf's modest volume already referred to, "A Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit." Every present purpose will be met by noticing the most important features of what is at present the only live movement in eccentric lines, the so-called "Keswick movement."

This is chiefly remarkable as a reproduction in Protestant circles of a distinctively Roman Catholic phasis of sanctification. Like various monastic orders its discipline proposes a series of graded approaches; like quietistic mysticism these approaches end in complete passivity of the will, the so-called "surrendered life," and so in receptivity for an unmediated infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The most marked point of likeness to previous notions of Protestant sanctificationists is the most unfortunate perhaps of them all; namely, the fancy that those who have received "the blessing" constitute a class apart, are as different in species from other Christians as among animals a new species would be, if it had been not evolved but specially created. A curious and decisive indication of this self-estimate is that no one is allowed to speak at the Keswick conferences unless he has obtained "the fullness." All other Christians are but postulants, seeking initiation into a mystery, commonplace disciples putting themselves in the way of a

second and, this time, a sanctifying and specializing regeneration.

It is only natural to expect what is distinctly taught, that those who are singularly blessed are also correspondingly empowered. Being full of the Holy Spirit they have delightful exemption from sin, unruffled peace with God, and commanding authority over the hearts of men. The fullness of the Spirit is given all the credit, and to expect less from him would be to disparage the Spirit and disbelieve God. No success internal or external is won by native vigor or capacity, neither is it excluded by native incapacity or weakness. One cannot but notice how composed and effortless are the public addresses of the Keswick leaders, at least in the presence of a congenial congregation. If their inner life is as far from self-buffettings and agonizings as their mastery of friendly assemblies, they have a happier lot by far than Paul's, for whom "without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Cor. 7 : 5), and who could not propose his own example to mature ("perfect") Christians for more than this : "I press toward the mark" (Phil. 3 : 14, 15), "I follow Christ" (1 Cor. 11 : 1). One hears of devoted ministers too busy in the service of needy souls, to gain and keep for themselves the spiritual luxuries which more self-regarding saints enjoy. Possibly Paul was one of these, or would find himself so, if he lived in our day of fresh views, exigent openings, and multiform responsibilities.

Without minute study of this latest and most genial form of Protestant mysticism, with its modest air and its winning ways, we may notice that two demerits belong to its leading features. Those who partition off

the new life into two parts, the first of which can never grow into the second, but is distinct from it as the new life from the old, if they look to the New Testament as the standard of Christian truth, ought to be staggered by its total silence on a point so important. That the regenerate are radically unlike the unregenerate is steadily and variously taught; but that in the genus, new man, there are two species we nowhere read. There are varieties but not different species of Christians. What the varieties, and whence they are, is not at this moment the question. We note here that all are children of one household. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male and female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3 : 28). And so goes the one offensive and entirely extra-scriptural pretension of these brethren. But though it is the most unlovely thing in the Keswick doctrine, I fear that for many it is the most attractive. I do not mean that some aspire so much to be unlike their brethren, but they long to be unlike themselves.

The other radical error is not only unscriptural but psychologically and ethically indefensible. It is the mistake of believing that the Holy Spirit bestows his supreme gift, consummates all which can be done for the faithful, by filling them with superhuman energy while all their human functions and activities are in abeyance. This notion that suspension of human thought, feeling, volition, is the condition of an infusion of divine power is an extreme form of mysticism, barely stopping short of the ancient soothsayer's or modern spiritualist's trance. It is even at a disadvantage in such comparison; for the diviner, while in a state of arrested men-

tality, sometimes of suspended animation, offers his organism to the use of the invading spirit ; whereas the Christian devotee remains conscious, and thus presents the quite baffling anomaly—a human consciousness of an exclusively divine process.

But the Bible in no case represents the infilling of the Spirit as an occurrence of this abnormal kind. Not even the cases of Balaam, or King Saul, or Pentecost, or Paul's vision of Paradise, or John's in the Apocalypse, exhibit this anomaly. In none of these cases was there first a voluntary passivity, secondly an impletion from without.

Against it is not only its entirely extra-scriptural character, but its thorough irreconcilability with the laws of our mental and moral constitution. All our capacities are developed by normal use, not created by disuse. The lower may grow into surprisingly greater efficiency, but never provide through neglect for the origination of entirely new faculties. This difficulty is not met by alleging that regeneration is the origination of something new. It is nothing new which regeneration provides, except new direction of the affections and the momentous results which this rectification of our loves and likings brings in its train. Not even regeneration, with all the mystery and potency of it, can claim to be the impartation of occult powers. The Holy Spirit in regeneration sets our hearts right, and thus enables intellect and will to serve God and man. But the heart does not first put itself in a passive state, and then receive regeneration as a pitcher accepts water at the fountain. Nothing in the history of our race goes to justify the position that intellectual ability or moral



excellence begins, progresses, or is consummated by inactive submission to an extraneous force.

The completest refutation of this singular conception of an inert reception of spiritual power is the everywhere assured fact that the Holy Spirit's all-inclusive office on human souls is to minister the truth. But while this fact corrects the fundamental mistake of the Keswick movement, it also indicates the actual equipment of the new life.

The new life requires to be variously equipped for its own advancement and for the discharge of its proper offices. All agree that we are to look to the Holy Spirit for these aids. Christ promised the constant indwelling of the Spirit, and also his special assistance upon occasion. All this has been fully discussed in preceding chapters. No terms, however striking, such as unction, baptism, filling, sealing, can set aside by their obviously figurative suggestiveness the unequivocal and thoroughly established office of the Spirit to minister the truth to us and through us. The biblical student may find each one of these terms offering its own special glimpse of the Holy Spirit's aid, for each is a fit figure; but like the figures by which the beginning of the new life is set forth, these names for the development and activities of that life cannot be rationally construed as a violation of that life's essential nature.

If the truth is to be the instrument of the Holy Spirit it is indispensable to think. How preposterous to expect devotion to objects to which we do not give our mind. How impossible to maintain love and loyalty to the unseen Father if we do not think about him.

And is it not impracticable to maintain more than uncertain fidelity by occasional reflection, with long lapses into thoughtlessness? Must we not dread any scheme, which by undertaking to make the Christian life all good in a twinkling, inevitably disparages the efficiency of habitual and ordinary devotional practices? Again we ask what hope is there that the spiritual life can reach its best development on any other terms than those observed by the moral, mental, and even physical life? No one dreams of great bodily prowess, or of high intellectual successes, or lofty virtues, except through regular, intelligent, and persistent nourishment and exercise. How can the Holy Spirit equip the new life except by means of the truth? Or how make the truth of service beyond the degree in which we think the truth? Indeed, is anything connected with the special measures taken by specialists in sanctification more obvious than that they begin at once to press their views of truth, and succeed in helping those who ask their guidance only to the extent that the minds of their spiritual clients are occupied with these views?

In brief, if the Holy Spirit can do anything to promote the vigor and the activities of the new life, it must be by ministering those ideas which are fitted to give right direction to our affections and to make us both energetic and wise in what we undertake. The ministry of the truth is possible for such only as think the truth.

### **5. Outlook of the New Life**

“Now he who confirms us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor. 1 : 21, 22).

No loftier Christian teaching can be found than that concerning the future life and the security for it. This teaching is marked by breadth, by elevation, and by insight. It was a poor and narrow aspiration of pagan philosophers which could be contented with immortality of the soul. The New Testament can hardly be said to mention this. That man has an imperishable soul is taken for granted as the image of God in him. Pagan philosophy despised the body, but the body is as essential to human completeness as the soul is. The dread of death is a normal shrinking from separation of what belong together. Neither apart from the other is less than an object of horror. Even the popular names for them are uncanny. A body without a soul is spoken of as a "corpse," and a soul without a body we call a "ghost." Of the two the disembodied spirit is the object of greater dread. Most people would rather meet with a dead body than be confronted by a living ghost. If familiarity relieves of all shrinking from dead bodies the man whose place it is to prepare them for decent burial, and if Spiritualists have outgrown abhorrence of necromancy, neither the necessary business of the one nor the profane practices of the other can escape with right-minded persons the conviction of the ancient Hebrews that these occupations are either an unavoidable defilement or an atrocious impiety.

Paul was willing to "be absent from the body" in order to be "present with the Lord," but even Paul desired "not to be unclothed but clothed upon" (2 Cor. 5 : 1-8). Who wants to be a ghost? To be alive without a body is precisely what death is, and a bodiless immortality of the soul would be only an eternal death.

It is therefore most wholesome and broad-minded in Christianity to include resurrection in its conception of eternal life. Nor ought we to allow any theoretical detail about the spiritual body to be accepted as equivalent to the promise of such a body. The psychical—soulish, natural—body does not consist of psyche or soul, but is suited to the soul; so the spiritual body is not presumably to consist of spirit, but to be suited to the spirit and afforded by the indwelling Spirit of God.

The Christian doctrine of life is lofty as it is wide. Holiness is essential to life and the Holy Spirit its fitting earnest. We are to remember that holiness is not an arbitrary or merely attachable quality for human souls. It is simply normality. It is to the moral nature what health is to the body. All viciousness, all departure from purity is moral disease. To make an indulgence out of it is as shocking as to make a luxury of a sore. The future must be either holy or unwholesome. The Christian hopes to be free from all sinfulness and sinning.

It is part of the same general conception of normal living that the social faculties shall be employed. Religion itself is such an employment. It hardly required Paul's assurance to satisfy us that love will abide and therefore have its objects. Solitariness forever would be an unendurable imprisonment even if the wide universe were its cell.

But normal activity supplies happiness. Happiness visits us on no other terms. The wholeness and holiness of the future will naturally be a state of blessedness. Of this the Holy Spirit is doubly the pledge: it promises the holiness that will make us happy and it

affords us at least a foretaste of that happiness now. In fact, the discomfort which the Spirit gives a disobedient Christian is a lesson and an assurance of how happiness is possible for him. Christ will one day have his own, and they will be happy with their Lord. No other conception of the future is so wide or so high.

Such a conception is marked also by insight and accuracy. This appears when we add to recognition of the nature of future life a recognition of the security for it. "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will make alive your mortal bodies also, because of his Spirit that dwells in you" (Rom. 8 : 11). That is to say, the life beyond the grave is not to be imparted from without ; it springs up from within. The indwelling Spirit is the life of the soul and will be the life of the body also. The resurrection is not so much a miracle ; it is a manifestation. It was so with Christ ; it will be so with those in whom the Spirit of Christ is at home.

But the present possession of the Spirit of God could not be less than an earnest or part possession of the future life. How intelligible is the saying, "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 5 : 5). This may be thought of as a formal confirmation of a contract, a sealing. "Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise ; who is an earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. 1 : 13, 14). It is as though at one and the same time God had consecrated us by an anointing, made us sure for himself by a sealing, had himself

paid part of the price, had handed over to us a part of the purchase, and all by bestowing the Holy Spirit.

This is thoroughly characteristic of Christianity. If God makes any demands, he himself provides for meeting those demands ; and what he is doing by the Holy Spirit is but to follow up what he did in Jesus Christ. It may well warn us that if we " have not the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we are none of his " ; much more cheer us with an assurance that, " if Christ be in us, the Spirit is life because of righteousness " (Rom. 8 : 9, 10).

We have studied the offices of the Holy Spirit to the new life of the individual. But community of faith may very well bring with it community of interest. Co-operation might secure the ends for which Christ came, and the Spirit comes. There is one body where there is one Spirit ; one household, since there is one Head ; one church, because there is one Christ.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE HOUSEHOLD

THE church by the vast majority of Christians is made a mystery. Its members are believed to be in some inexplicable way so related as to constitute an organic whole which the Holy Spirit animates, as its members severally are not animated. Thus the church is invested with authority, authority over faith and over life, even authority from the King to allow or refuse admission to his kingdom. Such a doctrine grew up with conceptions of mystic efficiency in baptism and communion, and the authority claimed for the church was gradually centered in its officials.

This general view of the church is dear to its officials. Many who would repudiate papal and prelatical rule over themselves, are tenacious of their own rule over churches. Even avowed congregationalism does not always disenchant a pastor of his fancy for a pastoral dominance which finds no place in the congregational polity. Custom too, has quietly established in voluntary associations of churches the exercise of a control which independency avowedly forbids. The mystical theory of the church is dear also to the mystical-minded. Even brotherly love, and the relish for a spiritual ancestry, minister to the poetical thought of the church as a continuous unit, a quasi-personality, which has endured from the apostles until to-day, and can never cease to be.

If the question arises what scriptural authorization

can be found for such opinions, only inference from inference can be adduced, or at best texts diverted from their obviously intended meaning. Foregoing entirely all the familiar devices we may interpret the church by the indisputable office of the Spirit to minister the truth, and find this commandingly scriptural interpretation supported, as in the case of every other problem which it has unlocked for us, by the equally explicit and emphatic testimony of experience

### 1. Its Faith

The promise that the Holy Spirit would guide into all the truth was given to the company of the apostles. Did we find any reason, in studying that promise (Chapter XI.) for thinking that it was given to the apostles as officials rather than as persons, or to them jointly instead of singly? The truth is needed by all alike, is pertinent to all alike and, unless for extraordinary reasons to the contrary, must be regarded as ministered alike to all. The result shows it.

The result is an intimate relation between truth and life. So obviously are lives shaped by doctrines that according to common observation the adherents of each important and long existent Christian denomination exhibit types of character conformable to the teachings with which they have long been familiar. The placid Quaker faces are as noticeable as the demure Quaker hats and bonnets. It is less observed, but is equally true, that native differences of character tend to differences of Christian experience, and these to correspondent types of doctrine. Such facts illustrate the actual ministration of truth to groups of minds.

The type of character which results, and the inborn type which predisposes or excludes, as the case may be, ought to satisfy every thoughtful observer that, if the Holy Spirit ministers the truth, he ministers it not to a few church officers, but to spiritual-minded church-members, one and all.

The wide extension of the Spirit's office has a still more remarkable illustration. It amounts to a historical demonstration. It is a fact which grows fairly amazing when fully recognized. This fact is the prodigiously slow rate at which essential Christian truths come to light and gain general acceptance. The apostolic writings underlie the whole field, and occupy it so well that later generations thus far have had only to dig in those ancient mines, and work over their rich ore. Yet it has required the lapse of centuries to gain attention for one or another doctrine of capital importance. Some pre-eminent soul may discern the truth, but the church will not. Nineteen centuries ago the fullness of times had come for the fullness of revelation in Christ ; but afterward for the apprehension, one after another, of his great teachings, the full time did not arrive until Christian experience, by its slow process of digestion, had assimilated one truth, and become hungry for the next.

We can thus see how it became a demand not only of speculative reason but of reasonable faith that, if Jesus Christ was to be accepted as Saviour, some trustworthy conclusion should be reached as to who and what he was. It took three hundred years to settle it that he was divine in a sense definable and defensible, although the Spirit of God never ceased during those centuries to testify to spiritual men that Christ was the

Son of God and they the children of God ; so slow are we to learn what we are unremittingly taught. When at length the Redeemer's divinity had been formally declared the formidableness of the evil which he undertook to deliver men from would challenge notice. And so the hundred years which followed Athanasius produced an Augustine, and by consensus of the Holy Spirit with the consciences of men the doctrine that it is natural for man to sin was virtually settled for all time.

Eight hundred years now elapse, during which certain collateral issues were decided and no small attention given to developing and establishing the papal doctrine of the church and its sacraments. But at the beginning of the twelfth century the remarkable intellectual activity of scholasticism awoke in the pious soul of Anselm with his exposition of the atonement. At length men had begun to ask to some purpose why Christ died. Why Christ died ? This was the good news, but it had taken eleven hundred years to elicit a hopeful answer to the question what the good news meant. Great thinkers thereupon wrought the answer over and over. They defined it and drew inferences from it, each in his peculiar way. They cried up Christ's merits, disputed about man's, and made everything turn to account of the church. It took another four hundred years to combine priestly rule and scholastic theology into a tyranny so grievous that once more Christ had to call the heavy-laden to himself. And he did it. As though it were an unheard-of message from heaven, Luther listened for his life, and then spoke to his generation. Thus at last, after fifteen hundred years, was the gospel applied. The Holy Spirit led Luther through a relig-

ious experience which in essentials repeated that of Paul, and the consciousness of a great Christian rose like a great light upon the consciousness of a perplexed, energetic, and deeply religious age.

In those great days one could not have expected that the doctrine of justification by faith, "the article of a standing or a falling church," would by and by harden into the lifeless orthodoxy of the continent, the free and easy morality of England, and in all regions both sides the sea where Protestantism prevailed afford the congenial soil of decay to every fungus of heresy and infidelity. But this occurred, and the hearts that kept the faith were once again led by the Holy Spirit into a practically new truth to awaken the nations withal. This was the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as popularly preached in England by the Wesleys and taught in mystical form among the learned by the Pietists in Germany.

In every age it has been a consciousness of need which has prepared men for a consciousness of help. Plainly the Spirit of God waited long for his opportunity and seized it when the church at large would listen to his instructions. Christ has to be reinterpreted to every age if not to every generation, and it is the brotherhood of believers, not clerics nor councils nor popes, who know their Lord under every fresh guise. The voice of the Spirit has proved to be a voice for all.

Now and then we may find an illustration of the same fact even in public affairs. The Holy Spirit so clearly taught in Luther's day, and it was so stoutly maintained by Luther himself, that every child of God had the right and the duty of interpreting the Bible for himself as to seem a guaranty of universal liberty so to do.

But the consciousness of Christians did not as yet lay hold of this so logical conclusion, did not do so even in the colonies of the New World. It was not until 1791, a century and a half after Roger Williams had settled in Rhode Island, if that uneasy spirit may be said to have settled anywhere, that religious liberty was recognized by constitutional amendment as a religious doctrine of American politics. Not all Christendom believes in it yet. The spirit of liberty has not won a universal hearing. Many honest disciples are still to be led into this truth.

It is evident that what the Spirit of God has yet to do for guidance of the church into truth must be done in harmony with the strangely slow working of "the common mass of human minds," and equally that the teaching which the Spirit gave in such fullness at the establishment of Christianity can become available to later ages only by the activity of the same Messenger who first took the things of Christ and showed them unto men. Is it, then, the purpose of Him who poured out his Spirit on all flesh and made even servants and handmaids prophets, to withdraw the Spirit after the first pentecostal day of this looked-for age? He gave them "an unction from the Holy One, that they might know all things." Does not the anointing received of him still abide? Do we, as they did not, "need that a man teach us"? Or may we accept for ourselves that anointing of the Spirit which is truth and no lie, and the church of our day, like the first few disciples, abide in him? (1 John 2 : 20, 27.)

If since that wonderful first age we are not taught



“all things” at once but only one thing at a time, and are a long while in learning this one thing, that which we learn by experience we at least learn by heart; and while the fullness of the early faith, because it had not the tutelage of general experience behind it, like the innocence of Adam, was soon despoiled, it has not been possible for general defection to go far after the Holy Spirit has taught the church the great Christian truths in turn. It required centuries in each case to complete the preparations, but the day for whose rising centuries prepared has never again passed into thick night. Such rare days of illumination have been like the eternal day of God. When the sun shall arise at last upon that day it shall rise to know no setting. The church even now is anxiously waiting to learn whether God has a special message for our times. If he has, we may be sure that the Spirit of God will not whisper it in the ear of the good pope alone who now sits authorized to listen and to speak, nor will trumpet it loud to a council of the world’s bishops, but will lead the church at large to see it without proving, as it sees for itself and needs no demonstration that the sun has risen. Nothing is so convincingly settled as that which history settles, and history has shown that the Holy Spirit guides effectually when he guides all Christians into knowledge of Christian truth.

Unhappy effects are produced on the faith of the church by regarding it as a mystical body for which the Holy Spirit does what he cannot undertake for individual believers. A mystical body must have a mystical voice. To find such a voice it must have mysti-

cally endowed leaders. To hold that the Holy Spirit leads the mystical person, the church, into the truth as believing persons are not led, would of itself involve a scheme of sacerdotalism. Such a requirement naturally enforces next the need of a sacerdotal order duly equipped to administer mystic sacraments.

Officials who alone can give voice to the Holy Spirit's teaching at once take lordship over faith. We have seen that the agreement, and it is a slowly enlarging agreement of all who study the Bible, and of all who have a Christian experience to study, cannot be at fault concerning what the Bible or experience teaches. A mistake in the consensus would mean that every one mistakes the Bible's doctrine and every one is misled by the inner life. Yet the official voice of the church, while it pretends to declare the consensus, does not utter the convictions of unofficial believers. It abhors and silences the voice of the multitude. The official voices, therefore, may fall short of the common faith and in important particulars far outrun and even violate that faith. Witness the vast accumulation of Roman Catholic dogmas from the earliest attempts at a metaphysic of the Trinity to the decrees of immaculate conception and papal infallibility.

Not only is the faith perverted and overloaded, but the official correction of errors becomes next to impossible and the normal enlargement of doctrine is greatly impeded. The dark history of persecution is but the final story of the mischief wrought by the doctrine that truth is afforded by the Holy Spirit to a mystically endowed organization. If this doctrine is true, its effect on the faith of the church is disastrous, and when

contrasted with the unofficial and ever-progressive consensus of believers is seen to be exclusively disastrous. A false method prevents a true method of advance in the understanding of the Christian verities.

## 2. Its Work

Quite as unfortunate are the effects of the mystical theory on the church's work. If the church is a mystical body especially endued by the Holy Spirit, churches cannot be voluntarily organized. An attempt at such organization, whatever the need, would be a sacrilegious Uzzah's touch of the ark. Validity must come through exclusive channels, and ecclesiastical invalidity is ecclesiastical impiety. If such a restraint on the church's growth is not superstitious, it has the unhappy characteristics and results of superstition.

It follows at once that the sacraments are vehicles of grace, the chief vehicles for a mystic grace which is the choicest grace. But Christians must forego the sacraments and their grace, unless from hands made fit by the touch of fitted hands in unbroken recession to the apostles. Where is the Scripture, or where the experience for a claim, which may perhaps be best described by calling it queer? Corresponding restraint is put on Christian enterprise. Objection to it is spontaneous and generally insuperable. It is felt that in a mystic body, with mystic efficiency, only the mystically sanctioned hand should be put to the work. The resistance of the English Church to Wesleyanism is matched by as general antagonism of American Episcopalians to revivals. How lamentable that these noteworthy and exceptional visitations of the Holy Spirit to the world

itself should to so small extent secure the discreet and seemly co-operation of the Episcopalian clergy.

But reliance upon an inexplicable and unrecognizable aid of the Holy Spirit involves as its greatest drawback neglect of the enormous efficiency provided for in the social faculties. Human society has incalculable power over persons. When we seek historical instances most minds run back to well-known illustrations of a malign influence in society. We recall those periods when French high life had no reprobation for half-concealed unfaithfulness to the marriage tie, and not even hypocrisy "rendered homage to virtue." Or we gaze with amazement at the brutal spectacle of national hatreds and at race antagonisms, sanctioning and even insisting on public outrage. Or we turn with disgust from the low standards of political morality, which allow the officials of a city or State to make the discharge of their functions tributary, in the face of the world, to the enrichments of "bosses" and "rings," and even fill the official breast with resentment against the helpless protests of upright citizens. It is the power of society for evil which thrusts itself on our notice.

But the power of society over the individual is not alone for evil. Now and then we notice its vigor for good. Indeed we live in its constant protection. Public sentiment is in most matters unequivocally for decency and right. It wraps us around like an atmosphere. We breathe it and are pervaded by it. It habitually supports the loyal and brave if they figure at a sufficient remove from local concerns. The elder generation can never forget the sodden and shameful depression which the whole people of the United States felt in the months

immediately preceding the outbreak of civil war. In North and South alike the indecision and dismay were pitiful and painful, if not disgraceful. But with the sound of the first gun at Fort Sumter how sudden a transformation. North and South awoke, leaped to their feet, knew at once what they wanted and what they would do. The moral revolution was complete and sublime. Men who would have hidden from a pistol pointed their way at any distance from which it could be seen, hastened to face the musketry, the batteries, the charging squadrons of the bloodiest battlefields in modern history. It was the noble spectacle of public conscience stimulating private conscience. And then it was the conscience of the regiment, the brigade, the division, the corps, the army which led the soldier up to death. How is it possible to overstate the energy of the social faculties? and how can one think with complacency of a theory about the church, unintimated in Scripture, unsupported by experience, which entirely commits the service of the church for mankind to alleged occult relations of the Holy Spirit, and leaves unenlisted, untrained, unregarded the mighty enginery of the social powers in man? What a transformation if those powers were fully employed. What limitless capacity for conquest would the churches put at the disposal of the Holy Spirit if men's capacity for orderly warfare were disciplined and put at command of the Captain of our salvation. Is it necessary to give over the great resource to the eccentric and questionable practices of salvationists and Jesuits? Or may we expect in this present age of unfettered enterprise and free organization that the men who embody and can

lead the spirit of our day will find out by and by how to make of the Brotherhood a labor union? Would not the Holy Spirit once more prove the level fitness of Christian faith and life to every age? If to any degree this comes about, the result of the Holy Spirit's co-action with spiritual men, in normal and intelligible ways, will surely put to the blush all the hampered and hampering efforts thus far made under sway of the doctrine which remands the whole possibility to the mystic operations of the Spirit through a mystical union. It is not to belittle but to magnify the work of the Holy Spirit in the church that it is here sought to translate it from enigma into life.

No other religious use of the social faculties is so striking as revivals. It would be worth knowing how large part of church-members were thus gathered. It might prove startlingly large—startlingly, because many are saying that no more great revivals can be hoped for. The late D. L. Moody found that the people would no longer rally at his call—perhaps because he had ceased to call the people, and preferred to summon church-members to better living. But revivals are not rare in our Southern States. They follow Torrey and Alexander in old England as well as in new Australia. To lack revivals would be to lack the mightiest social enginery. It would be to miss that which made the great age of the Reformation, of the Wesleyan awakening, and of the nineteenth century American revivals pre-eminent in the history of the church. The church can no more spare revivals than politics can spare its wordy campaigns, or nations use only skirmishers in war.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE GUIDE-BOOK

THE long familiar method of making out the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures is first to prove their date, their writers, their truthfulness, and then to ask what they say for themselves. The method is legitimate and will never be outgrown ; there will always be a biblical doctrine of the Bible, but the so familiar method has certain disadvantages.

#### 1. Defects of a Test

##### (1) View from Without

That method takes up the matter from without, as a heathen might, or as a Christian would try the inspiration of the Koran or the Book of Mormon. The Bible may be able to bear this sort of investigation, but it is unfair. At least it may well seem so to a believer in the Bible. Decidedly it is not the method which the Book itself suggests. The Scriptures do not isolate themselves. They do not claim to be the product of a life in which their reader has no share. On the contrary, they continually appeal to a spiritual life shared by the reader and uttered for him. In fact it is only by a study from within that we can determine how far the Scriptures are the product of spiritual gifts outside common experience. Only by recognizing to what extent they are the voice of the Spirit who dwells in every believer and speaks to every believer, can it be certified

that he has entrusted a message to a special messenger and that the Bible is a record of such messages.

## (2) **Authority Unsettled**

If the special inspiration of the biblical writers is admitted this has not settled the question of their authority. It raises that question. One has to ask how far special inspiration extends. Does it cover all the thoughts of an inspired man on a theme with which the inspiration deals? Does he draw no inferences of his own? Does he distinguish thoughts all his own, or partly his own, from thoughts wholly inspired? It is plain that every man thinks along lines determined in part by the thought of his day. Every important writer of holy Scripture shows this. Even at his loftiest his own personal characteristics appear. Isaiah is never so unmistakably Isaiah, nor Paul so pre-eminently Paul as when the prophet and the apostle are borne by the Holy Spirit to the greatest heights. No one is like either when each owes most to inspiration. It is quite clear that inspiration is not in itself inerrancy. If inspiration were mechanical, then only would it needs be inerrant.

To be sure, it could not be accepted as of absolute authority, unless its source were known to be from outside its writers; but no extraneous authority can give a felt assurance of its own existence. It must be met by a recognition which is a submission on the part of readers in whose breast the Spirit dwells. The Spirit within us knows the voice of the Spirit that addresses us. We may even explain that the truth already experienced finds the new truth congruous, complementary, and completing. In the progress of doctrine exhibited by the

sacred books nothing is more marked than the preparation by earlier truth for later truth.

The show of formal authority may even impair the sense of real authority. It is certainly the case with many minds at present. For them the process needs to be reversed. The felt divinity of the message might welcome a claim of divinity, but to begin with the pretense of a sign is to invite skepticism. And so the familiar method of proving that God is in the Book by approaching the innermost shrine of truth from without, is never in our day privileged to see the Shekinah, never knows absolutely that this is where God dwells, and may even be struck with astonishment, as presumptuous Pompey was, to find the Holy of Holies empty.

### (3) Evidence Meagre

Such a method is also confronted by the very unequal testimony of Scripture itself as to various offices of inspiration. That these offices are strikingly unlike it is impossible to deny. Foremost is revelation of truth. Jesus is set forth as the full revelation of God. All say it. Paul claims to have received his gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. caps. 1 and 2). Another fruit of inspiration is insight or understanding of spiritual things. This too is amply claimed, and again pre-eminently by Paul (1 Cor. caps. 1 and 2). Both these offices would be admitted by all who call themselves Christians, and in some sense by many who repudiate the name. The issue among believers is not as to knowledge, but as to telling what is known. Did inspiration aid utterance? Is there a third office of this kind? Every phase of opinion on this point has

been advocated, from the theory of verbal dictation to a mere recognition that any help to think truly is necessarily a help to speak correctly. Yet if we look for direct evidence that the Holy Spirit aided the writers of the New Testament, there is but a single claim on their part to this effect, the statement of Paul, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2 : 13). The term for "words" (λόγους) does not mean mere vocables, but in a large way utterance. The fact that such a claim is made but once must imply that the issue has not such intrinsic importance as controversy gives it. If special aid were altogether wanting, still we might accept the writers of Scripture as witnesses competent in knowledge, in honesty, and in ability to say what they know. We might even recognize that, in common with many writers and preachers since that day, they enjoyed a divinely imparted gift of using the mother tongue. So far, then, is careful scrutiny of the Spirit's offices from establishing a claim by the New Testament itself to exclusive inspiration in the sense with which controversy has been busy.

#### (4) Problem of Criticism

But the situation peculiar to our own day raises the most formidable objection to sole dependence on the familiar method for confirming the authority of Scripture. Modern criticism challenges either the authorship or the trustworthiness of every book in the New Testament ; and if criticism overturns faith in the New Testament, faith in the elder Scriptures must still more rapidly decline. The familiar method began with ac-

cepting the books of the New Testament as genuine and veracious; criticism too begins at the beginning with its denials. It is not necessary to assume that the answer of hostile criticism is true. There is sufficient reason for believing that it is untrue. But while scholarship debates literary issues, has faith no sure footing? Must trust in Jesus Christ, and must the practice of all Christian rules and rites be suspended by every candid man until the points in dispute are settled beyond appeal? It would have to be so if faith in the Bible depended upon external evidences.

## **2. A Convincing Test**

The best evidence for Christianity is the Christian, and the best evidence for inspiration is the truth which has formed the Christian. It would be impossible to gainsay either a sufficiency or a defect of evidence at this point. The conclusive testimony to Christ we found to be the accomplishment of his mission for men, and correspondingly, the conclusive testimony to the Holy Spirit is the teachings which were the means of achieving in men the mission of Christ. The era of the Holy Spirit is the era of Christ. It is the truth which makes men free. Christ is the truth, and the Spirit is the minister of the truth.

If, then, we trace the ministration of Christian truth in the implanting and growth of the Christian, we are following the surest, the only irrefutable evidence to Christ or to inspiration. But this it is quite possible to do. Thus is established in the highest degree the authority of the New Testament's contents, irrespective of all questions mooted, and so far left unsettled by

modern criticism. There will be a *modus vivendi* for faith so long as these questions remain open.

### New Testament Idea of a Christian

The mission of our Lord was not abruptly declared. It unfolded itself but gradually to his own consciousness as some think, to the minds of his followers as all agree. The share of the Holy Spirit in unfolding his mission could be best understood if this development were traced in detail. No such detail, however, is needed for the present purpose. The general character of the process by which his purposes came to light was abundantly advertised by the conduct of his adherents, and even of the populace. The sick were cured; the deaf and blind restored; men harried by demons were set free; hungry, they were fed at no pains to themselves, at no cost to him, or they were only wonder-mongering and full of debate about what they had seen. Could Jesus be made king, such a provider would please them. Even his intimates did not escape the influence of the popular prepossessions. His own kindred, not yet believing in him, challenged him to meet the general wishes. "Tell these things," said he, "to John"; for John had demanded of him, "Do we look for another?" The outer circle came and went. Every new revelation of his aims attracted perhaps some stranger, or more often repelled some adherent. Even to his own mind it was a question whether the inner circle would break up before the final treason; whether those who knew him best, loved him most, and bore his commission, would also go away. In the midst of this *tohu bohu* we may discern the development of the New Testament's idea as



to what constituted a Christian. This idea will be the exponent of the developing idea of the Messiah's mission and of the conquering office of the Holy Spirit.

At first all his followers regarded him as the future King of Israel. He himself took up the announcement of John (Matt. 4 : 17). As late as the time of his third tour through Galilee he sent forth the Twelve in pairs to canvass, as we would say, the distressed and shepherdless multitude, with power to heal diseases and cast out unclean spirits ; but still the message with which to arouse and gladden the people was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10 : 7). Christ was himself to be the King. At least they hoped so.

But if it was his place to be king, what was that of the Twelve, unless to be high functionaries over the many subjects of his kingdom? This persuasion lasted long. That some time there was to be a temporal kingdom, and that if it soon arrived it would have peculiar importance for their ambitions—ideas like these outlived the first Easter and came out in their questions, although the Master had just been trying to turn their thoughts toward the approaching and revolutionizing baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1 : 4-8). While Christ walked among men the Twelve never tired of debating which of them should be greatest ; and once ten of them were not unjustly indignant because the mother of Zebedee's children attempted, as late as the last sorrowful journey to Jerusalem, to be beforehand with the rest, and to secure a pledge of the highest honors for James and John. Had not the Holy Spirit revolutionized the dispensation, it would once again have been

quite fruitlessly that Christ promised to the politic brothers nothing more than a share in his awful baptism (Matt. 20 : 20-28), or laid it on the jealous ten that the chiefest among them would be one who was servant of all.

The idea as to Christ, his kingdom, and its subjects, ingrained by the hopes of centuries and constantly reappearing during the ministry of our Lord on earth, was more than half secular if not downright worldly. The Christ of the new era was identified with the Messiah of old Jewish hopes ; while such a misinterpretation of his mission made his followers at the first to be no more than a kind of Messiah-ites—if so horrible a name may be coined for so bad a thing. In order to *begin* being Christians they had much to *learn*.

Since the Lord refused to be such a Messiah as they wished him to be, the question arose what sort of Messiah he was willing to be. If he would not enter into plans ready-made for him, what were his plans? This attitude of inquiry made of him a teacher, and those who adhered to him became learners. Accordingly, in the Gospels they are habitually spoken of as “disciples,” and him they call “Master,” that is, Instructor. The relation of teacher and taught continued while Christ remained on earth. The Gospels claim to be a record of his teaching about himself, about his mission, and about the life which, as in the Sermon on the Mount, he proposed for his followers. How authoritative that teaching, was remarked at once with astonishment (Matt. 7 : 28, 29), and is felt, with recognition that it was a revelation, unto this day.

Traditional faith is, however, taken up with the

priestly functions of Christ, although these recur but scantily in the narrative books of the New Testament, while the figure of the divine Prophet or Teacher fills almost the entire scene. For this office there was constant and exigent need. How much John said about it we have noticed more than once. The most winsome invitation that he ever uttered, one which is recognized to be likeliest of all passages in the synoptists to the Gospel according to John, is precisely an invitation to find rest by learning of him (Matt. 11 : 27-30). If any one could then, or can now, accept Jesus as a teacher, he is a disciple, and may keep the Master's company like the Twelve. In due season he shall be taught all he needs to know. To be a Christian, according to the four Gospels, was to be a learner from Christ, and it was his confessedly divine teaching which thus comes to light. By a long but easy stride we move from the Gospels to the position of the book of Acts.

Naturally the crucifixion, resurrection, recurring epiphanies, and final ascension, all coming in swift succession, left the disciples in wonderment, and in sore need that their exalted Lord should still be their teacher. But he had made his last appearance and offered his final explanation. What was he now, and what were they? Earlier he had foretold that he must be put to death, that he must give himself as a ransom, and that remission of sins was to be in his blood; but it did not occur to their minds, no one can say for how long time, that these predictions had found their fulfillment on the cross. The earlier discourses in the Acts do not once speak of the crucifixion as a sacrifice, but

always as an outrage. That cruel instrument of death was not a Moses' rod, which might do wonders for the people's redemption; it was something that pricked their hearts. Peter accused their wicked hands of slaying a man approved of God among them; but whom God had exalted. The one thing left for them to do was to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2 : 22-38). Let us remark again how noteworthy a mark it is of historical trustworthiness in the Acts that the minds of the disciples do not at first look on the crucifixion as in any way expiatory, or as aught else than an awful outbreak of Jewish bigotry and human wickedness. As events progressed so progressed the revelation of truth, and as truth progressed so progressed the idea of a Christian. Historically, psychologically, and theologically, the book of the Acts is progressive and true.

The Messianic idea had never died out; now it revived, and seasonably. God had enthroned his Son, and if the people will repent, the Son shall be sent again to restore all things (Acts 3 : 13, 19-21). Presently Peter is ready to announce in set terms that Jesus has been exalted to be "a Prince and a Saviour," though so far in behalf of Israel only (Acts 5 : 31). Jesus was now the head of a heavenly kingdom which waited to become an earthly kingdom too. Christians were spiritual subjects, still with secular hopes. But Jesus was King, whether in heaven or on earth, and his followers were enlisted for the Messiah. We note their high confidence, their perfect courage, their untiring enterprise. They are Christians now, indeed, as to the stronger and aggressive elements of Christian character.

So far they are worthy of Christ. What made them so? A few of them had seen the Lord alive after his crucifixion and witnessed his return to the skies. But the greater part of them accepted this supreme fact on the testimony of the Spirit. It was distinctly the witness of God to his Son, a revelation worthy of its theme and indispensable to its purpose.

Presently faith in the Messiah of the Jews was enlarged to faith in the Christ of all men. It was granted to Peter, as he was always glad to recall, to be not only the foremost apostle of the circumcision, but the first apostle to the Gentiles (Acts, caps. 10 and 11). This gave to Christianity its note of universality, without which it would have been an incongruous and incomprehensible scheme of ideas; and this made a Christian the lover of his race, without which ruling sentiment he could have been hardly other than an antichrist. Yet this immense rectification and enlargement could have been accomplished only as it was accomplished, by the special teaching of the Spirit of God. If any Christian doctrine commends itself as inspired, both by its intrinsic nature and by its effect on Christians, it is this familiar doctrine that Christ is for us all.

Thus far the unfolding of truth and the development of character had the quality of extension; it remained to give to it intension. The aims of Christianity could never be wider, for they were wide now as the human race. But what did they propose for every man? How, to begin with, did they place a man before his Maker? It fell to Paul to announce that a right standing with God is possible, that there is "justification by faith from all things from which we could not be justified

by the law of Moses" (Acts 13 : 39). It does not yet appear that the ground of justification was either a vicarious sacrifice or a representative resurrection, or both. Nothing to such effect is said as yet by Paul, so far as the book of Acts reports him, except when he meets the Ephesian elders at Miletus (20 : 28). Of course, we do not know that he was silent on all that the report is silent on. But we do know that the Christian, to the mind of Paul, was not only the subject of Messiah's kingdom, but a forgiven sinner, accepted as a friend.

All will recognize this as the first step toward the intensification and spiritualization of the idea of the Christian. Every soul has his standing before God; Christ provided for peace with God. This was a wholly new gift to religion. It is universally recognized as the Pauline theology, and produced Pauline Christians. Or if it was not thought of now for quite the first time that a sinner might be forgiven, it was for the first time announced that all sinners may be justified. We now also for the first time recognize a Christian of the historic type. Inspiration supplied the type and maintains it. A Christian was now a transgressor justified.

But so far as we know it also fell to Paul to announce that Jesus became a Saviour by being a sacrifice. This is the doctrine of the four great Pauline Epistles which come first in our English Bibles, and was equally the teaching of Peter and John. But as Christ is the Saviour, so Christians are the saved. Christian history knows no other kind of Christian, and Christian history is neither to be swept aside nor toyed with. Christ died for our salvation. To believe this has made us Christians, and the Holy Spirit inspires that belief.



The vulgar notion as to what salvation is, although much protested against and not at all a complete presentation of the case, is not, after all, either unscriptural or in any other way positively at fault. It is negatively objectionable, if accepted as a complete account of the good news. To be "saved," as popularly understood, is to be secured against a danger threatened, rather than to be delivered from an evil endured. As to sin, to be saved is *primarily* to be safeguarded against its consequences, rather than freed from its practice.

This will be denounced as an unworthy view, as a degrading mistake, whether on the part of the Bible or on the part of popular theology. Let us, then, admit that the idea is pernicious, and still it remains the actual meaning of terms. If it is a mistake, it is to begin with, the Bible's mistake. Even when *to be saved* means to be cured of a disease the disease is regarded as threatening a graver evil than it is in itself. This too is the ordinary way of looking at serious disease the world over; it is a peril threatened rather than an injury suffered. The question always is, must the patient succumb? As to passages about spiritual salvation attentive reading will supply confirmation of what has just been said. These passages look forward. They speak of deliverance provided by Christ from the future death that sin earns. Even the interpretation of the name *Jesus*, "he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1 : 21), contemplates sin not as a ruin but as ruinous, precisely as is the case with disease.

No one should raise objections to the propriety of this view who is himself capable of risking property and person for the public safety, or who holds that the

public should take risks for private safety. Surely we are not to fancy that one may wisely guard against physical evils and disregard spiritual; that the bad consequences of a bad life are to be carefully shunned so long as the consequences are temporal, and to be freely risked if only they are eternal—for this world feared, for the next world defied. The infatuation of laxity is never more marked than when it esteems it liberal to shut one's own eyes, or one's neighbor's eyes, and calls it bigotry for a prudent man to foresee the evil and flee from it.

But it would be disastrous to believe that security from future penalties can leave one in the present power of sin. That power is itself an awful penalty of sin. Paul urges that justification is more than clearance from guilt and penalties. Grace makes alive. A Christian is a justified man, and a justified man is one who lives by the grace which justified him (Rom. 6 : 1-11). Here the importance of the resurrection begins to appear. It completes what the crucifixion provides. We are "risen with Christ" (Col. 3 : 1). A Christian, then, is one who lives, and "Christ is his life" (Col. 3 : 4). This idea became the well-known specialty of John's teaching and is the loftiest reach of the New Testament doctrine. "In him was life" is the melody of John's gospel: "He that hath the Son hath life" is the clear echo from the first Epistle (John 1 : 4; 1 John 5 : 12). It is the new ideal toward which the church is advancing, the always fuller attestation that the Holy Spirit inspired the Book and leads his people on.

A Christian, then, or follower of Christ, as he figures in the New Testament, is one who successively accepted

Jesus as Messiah, adopted him as Teacher, became the subject of Christ's rule in the spiritual realm, was justified in Christ, trusted in the crucifixion as a piacular sacrifice, by grace was delivered from sin, finally was one whose life is hid with Christ in God.

These views as to what a Christian is were held one after another, and he advanced correspondingly. What a Christian at any stage of development was thought to be reveals what Christ was then thought to do. The living embodiment of these ideas is the living attestation to God's work in a man and to God's thought in the Book. The inspired Book has produced the inspired life, and inspired lives through all the Christian ages have commended the inspiration of the Book. Criticism cannot set this aside, and none more heartily believe it than many critics. It does not matter so much who were the writers if God was the author of the sacred Scriptures.

The maturer, then, the development, and the finer the type of a Christian, the larger is his experience of Christian ideas; and the larger that experience, the completer the assurance to him and to all men that those ideas are from God. He knows, as no one else is able or ought to know, that the Holy Spirit gave to men the truth which it is the Spirit's supreme office to apply; and he is assured, as no one else is or can be assured, that the sacred Scriptures are a deposit of that truth. The life of such a Christian proves to others the inspiration of the Bible; the truth itself attests it to him. Faith in the Bible will not decline if the average type of Christian advances; faith in the Bible will not perish unless Christians cease to be.



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## DATE DUE

2-11-77

2/10

5/15/79

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

AUTHOR		JOHNSON, E. H.
TITLE		THE HOLY SPIRIT
DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME	
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